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General Assembly

FORTY-FIFTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
8th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 10 October 1990
at 7 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 8th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. PAPADATOS	(Greece)
later:	Mr. AMAZIANE (Vice-Chairman)	(Morocco)

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The meeting was called to order at 7.15 p.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. MARKS (United States) said that the end of the cold war heightened the chances for a meaningful political and economic dialogue between nations, in which the United Nations and the Second Committee of the General Assembly played a vital role. It had, of course, been possible to initiate that international dialogue despite the cold war, and many official and private programmes, both bilateral and multilateral, had been successfully launched as a result. His delegation, for its part, intended to sustain the enormous efforts it had made to provide financial and technical assistance. In certain countries, however, development was lagging and had even lost ground. The North-South dialogue had too often been a dialogue of the deaf and as a result of failure to understand such fundamental questions as, for example, the appropriate roles of the public and private sector, agreement on practical development assistance programmes had not yet been reached. The fact remained that, despite those difficulties, the wisdom shown by many Governments had averted a complete deadlock in the debate. Over the past 20 years, work had advanced on many programmes. The resulting progress, however, had been very unevenly spread throughout the world.

2. His delegation had always believed that one of the main obstacles to sustainable economic development was political in nature, for there was an extremely close relationship between political pluralism and economic progress. The fact that that conviction was becoming more widely recognized within the United Nations opened up new opportunities.

3. The profound changes which had recently taken place and which had led the world to rethink policies and programmes and focus them on human beings - who were viewed as the purpose and no longer as the mere object of political and economic organization - had been reflected in the desire for consensus at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. It had been particularly evident in the declaration adopted by the eighteenth special session. The forty-fifth session and the work of the Second Committee must also become a part of that process, in which Governments around the world were pooling their experience in an attempt to tackle the age-old problems of poverty and disease.

4. In a world where it was incumbent on man to fight against the unevenness of economic conditions - a result of history and objective facts - his delegation proposed an examination of the issues from a new perspective based on three general themes. There was, first of all, the question of "conditionality", or the conditions required by both the North and the South in order to bring about genuine mutual assistance in the world. If human and material resources were to be successfully transferred, the institutions of the donor and recipient countries must be properly organized, in the realization that economic development could not be shaped in a political vacuum, that economic centralism worked no better than political centralism, and that openness in one of those spheres acted positively on the other. The second question concerned the transfer of technology. The

(Mr. Marks, United States)

developing countries must become caught up in the whirlwind of scientific and technological progress, and they must become convinced that science was a dynamic process which went well beyond the transfer of passive resources. Lastly, there was the question of avoiding "marginality": all must participate actively and beneficially in a single world and reap the fruits of their participation. The changes which occurred in the East offered opportunities for progress not only to the peoples of that region of Europe, but also to the whole world. In that connection, his delegation, like many others, had made a formal commitment to strive to ensure that those changes would not adversely affect the developing countries, in particular the least developed countries.

5. That new perspective should shed light not only on traditional concerns, such as debt and poverty e[illegible]ication, but also on new problems, in particular that of the environment. His delegation was participating actively in United Nations initiatives in that area, particularly in the preparations for the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development and the negotiations for the elaboration of a framework convention on climate change.

6. The political development of recent years would make it possible to enter the new decade with abundant hope. His delegation had long believed that political democracy and economic development were complementary. It was pleased, therefore, to note that that view was, increasingly, shared by other Governments all over the world.

7. Mr. Amaziane (Morocco), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

8. Mr. BROTODININGRAT (Indonesia) said that a closer look at certain perspectives of the world economy gave cause for guarded optimism. First of all, the profound transformations which had taken place recently had considerably increased the interdependence and integration of the world economy and international economic relations. Those developments held out enlarged prospects for the common progress of all nations but without appropriate transition management, they might well end up further marginalizing the economies of developing countries.

9. Secondly, of late, the world economy was characterized by deceleration and unevenness. The deceleration of world economic growth had been compounded by uneven regional and national economic performances. While the developed countries had managed to maintain their longest post-war expansion, all the developing regions were experiencing a substantial economic slowdown.

10. Thirdly, the Gulf crisis could have far-reaching consequences on economic development and the world economy at large. Confronted by those problems, the international community must develop effective measures, and, in that context, his delegation welcomed the recent agreement on the formulation of the international development strategy for the 1990s, which should serve as an effective operational framework for the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countri s, adopted by the General Assembly at its eighteenth special session.

READEX FICHE

(Mr. Brotodiningrat, Indonesia)

11. The international community must also make every effort to ensure the successful outcome of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. It was very disturbing to note the lack of progress in those crucial negotiations. Even more regrettable was the fact that, while developing countries had spared no effort to bring about a successful conclusion of the Round, the developed countries had not shown the political will necessary to achieve balanced results in the negotiations. And yet, the developing countries supported the Uruguay Round in the genuine belief that it offered an opportunity to secure a more open, fair and equitable international trading system.

12. With regard to the debt problem, increasingly unbearable debt burdens had plunged many developing countries into stagnation and negative growth. Despite the adjustment programmes adopted by an increasing number of debtor developing countries, their problems showed few signs of improvement. Admittedly, there had been a somewhat greater political willingness to address the problem, as demonstrated by the recent initiatives designed to reduce the amount of debt and debt service. However, such initiatives needed to be complemented by other elements such as a positive approach rather than punitive measures by multilateral financial institutions and the provision of substantial additional resources to support debt reduction operations and facilitate adjustment measures. Such initiatives should be strengthened and broadened to include all categories of debtor developing countries. In addition, a comprehensive solution to the debt problem should also include facilities to assist those heavily indebted countries which had consistently honoured their debt obligations.

13. His country shared the General Assembly's concern at the economic impact of the Gulf crisis, including the impact on oil prices. As an oil exporter, while certainly not wishing for depressed oil prices, Indonesia felt uneasy with their currently abnormal rise. The members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) were doing all they could to mitigate soaring oil prices and to maintain stability by increasing their production. He hoped that other oil-producing countries would take similar measures. While Indonesia might stand to gain in the short term from the oil price increases, it believed that in an era of increasing interdependence, no economy could grow strong at the expense of others. On the other hand, the importance which the international community attached to oil prices when they were excessively high should be balanced by equal attention when they were abnormally low.

14. Mr. VALLENILLA (Venezuela) said that the good relations between the super-Powers created new prospects for the developing countries. However, it should be recognized that the peace dividend had not yet accrued to the developing countries. On the contrary, the precious resources freed by the reduction of expenditures linked to cold-war tensions went to other groups of countries or to recurring large-scale military operations. The new common understanding on the international political scene had been reflected in the adoption by consensus, at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, of a Declaration focusing on several areas of great importance for North-South relations. The purpose of that special session had been to initiate a process of closer relations and

(Mr. Vallenilla, Venezuela)

co-operation so as to institute a different order which, through growth and economic development, could promote the integration into the world economy of all members of the international community. Based on a global vision, a firm commitment had been made to undertake concerted action with regard to the challenges which must be met by the international community in the context of North-South relations.

15. World economic trends during the 1980s showed that the asymmetries and inequalities in the international economy had worsened. The developing countries had certainly been forced to take radical domestic measures to improve their efficiency, but the fact remained that their economic growth had been determined by the complex disequilibria of the developed countries. The industrialized world had imposed macro-economic policies which had not been designed so as to take into account their effect on the developing countries. In fact, almost throughout the past decade, the majority of developing countries had experienced negative growth. Whole regions, such as Latin America, had been forced to struggle vigorously against inflation and unemployment, to make adjustments, to experience growth and to restructure their productive capacity; in so doing, they had been hampered by the heavy external debt burden and a negative net transfer of financial resources. International trade had also been subject to those vicissitudes. Despite sustained growth during the 1980s, there had been virtually no reduction in trade barriers.

16. Moreover, the unpredictable fluctuations in the prices of raw materials, on which the vast majority of developing countries depended, had affected the producer countries throughout the decade. During 1990, the prices of raw materials had plunged by 8 per cent.

17. There was a trend towards greater integration into large trading blocs, which would be clearly reflected in 1992 by the integration within a single market of the member countries of the European Economic Community. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, having realized that without expanded markets and interaction between neighbouring economies it would be very difficult to confront the new challenges, were attempting to strengthen their regional and subregional integration. In that regard, it was to be hoped that the concerns of the developing countries would be duly taken into account in the Uruguay Round so that those negotiations could lead to equitable results.

18. The external debt crisis had entailed extraordinary costs, not only of a financial nature, but also of a political and social nature. The search for a solution to that tragic problem had been remarkably slow, which had been to the advantage of the creditors, considering the overall growth of the external debt and the rise in the transfer of resources abroad. Latin America's external debt exceeded $450 billion. In 1989, the 15 most indebted countries had spent more than 40 per cent of their export earnings, and their net transfers had amounted to $37 billion. The debt situation had been further complicated by the fact that capital and investment flows were essentially confined to the major industrialized countries, while being increasingly limited with regard to the debtor developing countries. In addition, the flows from the multilateral lending institutions to the debtor countries had been reduced to the point of becoming negative.

(Mr. Vallenilla, Venezuela)

19. The accelerated application of adjustment measures to promote growth had been encouraged, while not being accompanied by the transformations needed to create a favourable international economic climate. Accordingly, social and economic groups had realized that their contributions or sacrifices in terms of income and social benefits which had supposedly been temporary, would have to be prolonged for an indefinite period. During the 1990s, therefore, it was important for the developed world to establish positive co-operation policies in order to solve the global problems of growth and development; such co-operation should be commensurate with the domestic efforts which the developing countries were making at great cost. The developing countries were becoming increasingly convinced that the solution to their problems lay partially in their mutual solidarity and interdependence.

20. The questions of development and environment should not be mutually exclusive. The solutions applied should take into account the factors of development and not solely their impact in the economic, financial and social spheres. Owing to their decisive role with regard to pollution, the developed countries should assume greater responsibility. In that connection, the preparations for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development were encouraging. As a country which produced several types of energy, Venezuela was fully cognizant of the close relationship between environment and energy. His country encouraged the development of new and renewable energy sources.

21. The situation in the Persian Gulf was seriously threatening the economic growth of many developing countries, in particular the ones which imported energy. Venezuela had demonstrated its solidarity with such countries through several financial mechanisms, such as the San José Accord for Central America and the Caribbean and the OPEC Fund. It was a very abnormal situation dominated by forces beyond the control of the oil-producing countries and, while it had prompted a speculative rise in oil prices, it might also cause them to collapse. Any multilateral efforts which could be made should be encouraged and supported. In the general debate the President of Venezuela, Mr. Carlos Andrés Pérez, had proposed an oil conference of producer and consumer countries, under the auspices of the United Nations.

22. Positive and genuine international co-operation in the field of science and technology required the creation of favourable conditions for the acquisition of new technologies, but their transfer to the developing countries must be on favourable terms. International bodies should also endeavour to devise technologies suited to the needs of the developing world.

23. Mr. DOLJINTSEREN (Mongolia) said that important events were now taking place in the world which favoured an extension of détente and an improvement in the general political climate. However, the big economic problems of the contemporary world remained acute. The difficult situation of the developing countries had been further exacerbated by the Persian Gulf crisis, which inter alia had forced oil prices up. His delegation believed that a mechanism should be established to provide compensation for the damage inflicted on the developing countries by the new oil shock. It also thought that a system should be created to protect the developing countries which were poorly prepared to cope with that kind of situation.

(Mr. Doljintseren, Mongolia)

24. In order to solve current world economic problems, collective action must be intensified and public opinion mobilized in favour of development. It was particularly important to secure to that end a world consensus reflecting the interests and needs of all countries. Considerable progress had of course been made, especially through the adoption at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly of the Declaration of the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, whose Programme of Action represented a positive move towards an international consensus in favour of development.

25. No less important were the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade and the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the World Summit for Children. It was now a question of taking other concrete steps to remove the structural imbalances from the world economy and not being content with fine-sounding statements.

26. The improvement of the world economy depended to a large extent on the settlement of the foreign debt crisis. Mongolia was one of the many developing countries bearing a heavy foreign debt burden and it welcomed the recent initiatives taken by some creditor countries to reduce and cancel part of the debt of the developing countries, including the least developed among them. His delegation endorsed the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General on Debt.

27. The world always needed a free and more open system of international trade. Mongolia hoped that the GATT negotiations in the Uruguay Round would help to liberalize international trade and improve the access of the exports of the developing countries to the markets of the developed countries. It would be important for the interests of the economically weakest countries to be taken better into account in the negotiations.

28. As a member of the Group of 77 Mongolia attached great importance to the intensification of the relationships among the developing countries and to the strengthening of South-South co-operation, which was an integral part of world economic relations. It was studying the possibility of participating in the world system of trade preferences among developing countries.

29. The protection of the environment and of the ecological balance of the planet was today one of the necessary conditions for sustained development. His delegation attached particular importance to the ministerial conference on the environment of the countries of Asia and the Pacific which was to be held shortly in Bangkok. It was also in favour of the convening in 1992 in Brasilia of a United Nations conference on the environment and of the establishment of an international environment fund.

30. Weighty events had taken place during the last year in Mongolia. A multi-party political system had been established in the country. Profound changes had been made in the Constitution, and for the first time free and democratic elections to the Great People's Khural (the Mongolian Parliament) had been held.

(Mr. Doljintseren, Mongolia)

The national consciousness was growing stronger, the traditional culture was being reborn, and movements promoting environmental protection and the rule of law were expanding. Those political reforms were based on enormous and profound economic changes. Mongolia hoped that the measures currently being taken to decentralize and democratize economic activity, together with the formation of economic market relations, would create the essential conditions for the strengthening of economic initiative, the spirit of enterprise, and labour productivity and organization. Complete equality was being established for the different forms of property, including private property. The first law on foreign investments, adopted in 1990, was designed to attract foreign technology and capital, create joint enterprises, and guarantee proper protection for foreign investments. People, i.e. the question of the development of human resources, stood at the centre of the social and economic development efforts. His country therefore accorded great interest to the UNDP report on that vital issue.

31. Mongolia was currently pursuing a policy of economic openness, designed essentially to establish broad economic co-operation with all the countries of Asia. It was giving particular attention to the development and expansion of trade and economic relations with the new industrial countries of the region. The development experience of such new industrial countries ("the Asian tigers") could be of interest and use for many other countries, including his own. Such experience of the new industrialized countries was very instructive and very important, especially with regard to their policy of substituting local products for imports and stimulating the production of export goods.

32. In its difficult transitional period Mongolia was also counting on the support and assistance of the United Nations and the other international organizations. It had recently become a member of the Asian Development Bank and hoped to be admitted to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

33. Mr. GJIKA (Albania) said that the organizations of the United Nations had consistently worked to strengthen the international community's commitment to defining strategies and co-ordinating both regional and global efforts to promote development and international economic co-operation. Proof of that could be found in the many declarations and resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, as well as in the special sessions devoted to such issues, particularly the eighteenth special session. Despite modest progress in a limited number of countries or in given fields of regional economic co-operation, however, on balance none of the efforts in question gave any reason for optimism. On the contrary, the current international economic situation, particularly the situation in the developing countries, clearly showed signs of deterioration.

34. The positive political developments that had taken place in the world since the previous session had indeed generated great hopes, particularly the hope that co-operation would prevail over confrontation and understanding over mistrust. However, the same could not be said of international economic relations, which were still characterized by inequality and the division of the world between the rich North and the poor South. The developing countries' increasingly heavy debt burden

(Mr. Gjika, Albania)

and the steady deterioration of the terms of trade from their viewpoint, as well as the serious political, economic and social implications of drug production and trafficking, called for real collective action, particularly since the great progress made in the field of science and technology and the financial and human resources released as a result of the slackening of the arms race provided a means of ensuring true economic and social development for the benefit of all.

35. The members of the international community must seek solutions to economic and social problems as well as political ones. They had a duty to enable all countries to profit from the outcome of the improvement in the political and economic environment while also benefiting from scientific and technological spin-offs. It was the developed countries' duty, and the best way to assist the developing countries, to ease the developing countries' debt burden, improve terms of trade, give the developing countries' products access to their markets and grant the least developed countries preferential terms.

36. Albania welcomed the promising improvement in the international political climate, which could not but enhance the opportunities available to the United Nations and the essential role played by the United Nations in seeking solutions to serious political, social and economic problems that were increasingly international problems and urgently required a collective effort on the part of the entire international community.

37. Albania had always been and would remain a firm supporter of efforts and initiatives to promote peace, security, democracy and international economic, political and cultural co-operation. It was therefore taking steps to integrate itself fully into regional and European processes and initiatives with the same aim, both at the level of the Balkans, the Adriatic and the Mediterranean, and at the level of the European Economic Community and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. Similarly, it spared no efforts in its endeavour to strengthen co-operation with the United Nations and the organizations in the United Nations system.

38. Clearly, a country's development depended first and foremost on its own efforts. Albania had therefore embarked on a far-reaching process of change and economic, political and social transformations focusing on efficiency and democratization. In the firm resolve to make rational use of its abundant material resources and production capacity, Albania was modernizing its techniques, promoting creativity and initiative, improving its educational system and the training of specialists, and expanding co-operation with the outside world by permitting foreign investment and by encouraging joint enterprises.

39. Mr. MISSARY (Yemen) said that he welcomed the reunification of Germany and the admission to the United Nations of free Namibia and of Liechtenstein. He hoped that the improvement of East-West relations would result in progress in the field of disarmament, which would mean that a high proportion of the resources thus released could be used for development. If international peace and security were to be safeguarded, pending political problems must be solved and ways of solving

(Mr. Missary, Yemen)

economic, social and humanitarian problems must be found so as to restructure international relations in accordance with the principles of justice and equity. The slaughter of children in Palestinian Arab territory by the Israeli forces of occupation was a manifestation of the Israeli régime's contempt for the will of the international community, at a time when everybody believed that the United Nations had become an effective instrument for solving outstanding problems.

40. Recent developments in the Gulf demonstrated the determination of the entire international community to establish international peace and security. It would therefore be unjust if some peoples were to live under occupation while others were free to enjoy their wealth. A balance must therefore be struck between the right to land and the right to live in security. In that connection, the Republic of Yemen wished to emphasize that it fully supported the resolutions of the Security Council, in the hope that 1990 would mark the beginning of the implementation of all Council resolutions.

41. Referring to the declaration and the plan of action adopted by the General Assembly at its eighteenth special session, he said that the time had come to give a new impetus to international co-operation for development. He also wished to recall the Declaration and Plan of Action for the 1990s adopted by the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries; he hoped that the number of LDCs would fall in the 1990s, unlike in the 1980s. With regard to the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit for Children, he hoped that they would guarantee a better life for children and future generations. He also hoped that the international development strategy for the 1990s, adopted by consensus by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole, would contribute to economic growth and development in the developing countries.

42. The Republic of Yemen, the product of the merger of two parties that were both LDCs and had both fallen victim in the 1980s to a series of natural disasters (an earthquake and floods), was encountering great difficulties in implementing its development programmes. From the 1960s onwards remittances from Yemenis working in Saudi Arabia and throughout the Gulf area had been the country's chief source of revenue. However, as a result of the recent developments in the Gulf, Yemen had suffered great losses (more than $1 billion) owing to the closing down of the refineries that had refined Iraqi and Kuwaiti oil and the cessation of activities at the ports of Aden and Hodeida. In addition to the loss of revenue resulting from the cessation of remittances, over 180,000 Yemenis working in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and in other Gulf countries had been forced to return to Yemen, which had a direct impact on the financial situation of the repatriated workers themselves and on the economic situation of the country as a whole. He therefore hoped that both the countries concerned and the developed countries would understand how serious the situation was and help Yemen to overcome its economic crisis. He also hoped that the United Nations would set up appropriate machinery to compensate developing countries, particularly LDCs, affected by the events in question.

The meeting rose at 8.40 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-FIFTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
9th meeting
held on
Thursday, 11 October 1990
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 9th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece)

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GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. BAKOTO (Cameroon) said that his delegation endorsed the remarks made by the Chairman of the Group of 77 in making known the expectations of developing countries as a whole. The international economic situation had been extremely well analysed in the World Economic Survey 1990, which was usefully complemented by the final Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its eighteenth special session as well as the new international development strategy.

2. The renewed emphasis on multilateralism was timely provided that it was not selective. There was a need, too, to reconcile the acknowledged role of the major actors in the conduct of international economic affairs with the democratic participation of all States in their management. In that connection, the special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council in 1991, recommended by the Council in its resolution 1990/68, would provide a useful litmus test.

3. Despite the merits of market principles, it must be acknowledged that they had their shortcomings given the great of dependence of some African countries, including Cameroon, on commodity export earnings. The abrupt fall in commodity prices had resulted in a deterioration in the terms of trade of those countries. To rectify the situation, the Secretary-General had entrusted a group of experts with the task of studying the problems of the African primary sector, in implementation of General Assembly resolution 43/27.

4. The Integrated Programme for Commodities and the commodity agreements to be concluded under the Programme and supported by the Common Fund, the success of the Uruguay Round of negotiations and the IMF Compensatory Financing Facility all provided extremely useful instruments which should play a full role.

5. The fall in the prices of raw materials was having disastrous repercussions on debt servicing. Creditor countries must cancel or substantially reduce debts for all categories of countries, since negative transfers of resources from developing countries amounted to the very antithesis of international solidarity. Moreover, official development assistance must attain the level established some 20 years earlier, namely 0.7 per cent of gross national product.

6. His Government was fully aware that it bore primary responsibility for the development of Cameroon. It had undertaken all necessary reforms in the economic and political domains. But it was essential for the new commitments entered into to be effectively implemented. In the absence of the favourable international environment advocated in the new instruments, reform would be ineffectual. Genuine international co-operation was essential. He trusted that the new decade would fulfil the hopes placed in it.

7. Mr. LUCAS (Guyana) said that international economic relations were undergoing a profound transformation, particularly in Europe, where political and social change had swept aside the artificial divisions of the continent. The prospects for peaceful coexistence had improved. The Second Committee, in its discussions,

(Mr. Lucas, Guyana)

must consider the new challenges and horizons opening up before the international community.

8. The World Economic Survey 1990 had once again highlighted the varied economic performance of individual countries and groups of countries. Such were the circumstances in which the weaker economies of the world must provide for the welfare of their peoples. Their economies being in one way or another linked to those of the industrialized countries, it might be expected that they would benefit from any improvement in the latter's economic performance. However, paradoxically, sustained growth in the industrialized countries had provided very little relief for developing countries.

9. One consequence of that paradox was that IMF, for example, at the end of April 1990, had had 51 arrangements in place to respond to the economic needs of developing countries, representing more than double the annual average of the past two decades. That initiative demonstrated the growing need for financial resources to alleviate the critical situation besetting so many countries, and also indicated the need for a significant improvement in the functioning of the world economy.

10. The main problem to which a solution must speedily be found was that of developing-country indebtedness, which had been worsened by the fall in commodity prices. The international trade system as it currently operated, far from promoting growth, was in part responsible for the deterioration in the situation of the developing countries. That was particularly true of small debtor developing countries in which internal demand was weak, and survival and prosperity depended on external demand and hence access to international markets. The many tariff and non-tariff barriers which kept the products of developing countries out of the markets of developed countries should therefore be eliminated. Furthermore, developing countries as a whole did not enjoy a fair share of world trade, since they accounted for less than 25 per cent of world merchandise trade. His delegation hoped that the Uruguay Round of negotiations would remedy that injustice.

11. The globalization of the international economy, thenceforth a reality, had begun to change the contours of inter-State relations and the prospects for settling common problems. For example, greater consideration was being given to the development of human resources: the question had assumed global proportions, as seen at various multilateral meetings, such as the World Summit for Children. That trend was positive, but did not remove all cause for harbouring reservations. The instability of the financial markets, for example, still produced serious distortions in the economies of third world countries.

12. The United Nations had established the foundations of future co-operation with the adoption, in 1990 of the Declaration on international economic co-operation, at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly and of the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade. Given the new climate of entente currently prevailing, his delegation hoped that those instruments represented a new willingness on the part of the international community to resolve the economic crisis.

13. Mr. AL MABROUK (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that his country was willing to work for the success of the Second Committee's deliberations. Just and equitable relations were essential in the economic domain and no one country or group of countries should prosper at the expense of others. It was to be hoped that the enthusiasm which the international community had demonstrated in the political realm would also prevail in the economic sphere. Peace was not merely an absence of war; it also meant the ability of all peoples to fully realize their potential.

14. The 1980s had been a lost decade for developing countries, particularly African countries. It was to be hoped that the new decade would witness a common effort resulting in action intended to reverse that trend and ensure the stimulation of economic growth.

15. There was no doubt that the developing countries bore the primary responsibility for their own economic and social development. That was an unavoidable fact. However, their efforts were restricted by an extremely unfavourable external economic climate: indebtedness, a sharp increase in protectionism and a fall in commodity prices.

16. Not only was the gap between industrialized and other countries widening, but the developing countries did not have free access to modern technology. The rich were getting richer, and the poor poorer. Would that situation change? The answer to that question would depend on how the various Member States met the commitments they had made for the 1990s. It remained to be seen whether the Declaration adopted at the eighteenth special session and the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade would be implemented or whether they would remain a dead letter.

17. Mr. SHAKIR (Iraq) said that, with such important changes taking place in the countries of Eastern Europe, the developing countries should not remain passive. They must increase their co-operation in the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions of the Group of 77 if they were not to be left behind.

18. The embargo against Iraq reflected an inhuman attitude that was diametrically opposed to the noble ideals of the Organization, especially since it was also being applied to Iraqi imports of basic foodstuffs and medicines, which were not targeted by Security Council resolution 661. Those restrictions affected not only Iraq but a great many developing countries too. The rise in the price of crude oil would mean increased inflation and higher interest rates in the developed countries, which would widen still further the gap between the developed countries and the developing countries, whose standard of living had already declined because of the fall in commodity prices. Iraq was not responsible for that disastrous situation. The blame lay rather with the Western countries, which were interested only in oil, sought to control all the oil deposits and exported their inflation to the developing countries.

19. The increases in the price of crude oil were thus caused not by the oil-producing countries themselves, but rather by the monopolistic major oil companies, which were reaping enormous profits, even though President Bush had asked them not to increase oil prices unnecessarily. That caused acute problems for the heavily indebted, oil-importing developing countries.

(Mr. Shakir, Iraq)

20. Even if it did produce oil, Iraq was still a third world country which shared the sentiments of the developing countries and had always tried to help them to solve their problems. During the 1970s, it had provided assistance to many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. On 10 September 1990, his Government had announced that it was willing to deliver crude oil free of charge to the poorest developing countries, but the capitalist countries had used every means at their disposal to terrorize the countries that needed the oil by preventing its transport. As a result, the price of oil had doubled for those countries.

21. Moreover, the Western countries which had been struggling to keep oil prices from rising before the crisis were now trying to keep them high so that their allies could afford the military expenditures occasioned by the presence of their armed forces in the Gulf region. After only a few weeks, the cost of that operation had already reached $20 billion, money that would have been better spent on other purposes, such as improving the situation of the Palestinians, combating famine in Africa, solving refugee problems or finding solutions to the indebtedness of the third world countries.

22. His delegation hoped that the work of the Second Committee would be most productive.

23. Mr. EL NOUR (Sudan) said that he hoped the progress made in the political sphere would be reflected in the economic sphere. The international economic picture was far from bright, and the slowdown in world economic growth during the 1980s had had negative consequences, especially for the developing countries. Those countries had experienced prolonged economic stagnation, which had in some cases been aggravated by natural disasters. Moreover, the crisis in the Gulf had repercussions on the economic performance of oil-importing countries, especially the least developed countries.

24. Sudan had repeatedly affirmed that the developing countries had the primary responsibility for their own economic growth. It had therefore established a three-year economic recovery programme aimed, on the one hand, at the reactivation of all economic sectors and the utilization of all available resources, and, on the other hand, at the achievement of social equilibrium and the alleviation of the sufferings of the poorer sectors of the population. To attain those goals, his Government planned to develop the agricultural sector in order to achieve self-sufficiency in food production and to encourage exports. However, those efforts would be unsuccessful without a highly favourable international economic environment.

25. The debt problem affected both debtors and creditors. It was essential to increase official development assistance (ODA) to the least developed and other low-income countries. His delegation supported the appeal made by Mr. Ahmed, the Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs, for the commitments concerning increased ODA undertaken at the Paris Conference on the Least Developed Countries to be carried out promptly. It also appreciated the initiatives taken by some donor countries to reduce the debt burden.

(Mr. El Nour, Sudan)

26. It was to be hoped that the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development would reach important conclusions regarding the linkage between environment and development. Environmental problems were of particular concern to the Sudan, which had suffered several natural disasters. His country appreciated the assistance it had received from the United Nations system and the donor countries in its efforts to rehabilitate the disaster areas. It was also working with some of its neighbours to combat drought and desertification in order to promote regional development. International assistance was needed in that area, and his country hoped that the resources of the United Nations agencies would be increased so that they could provide assistance to needy countries.

27. Despite the many challenges, his country believed in the solidarity of all its partners and was confident that it would be possible to face all of the challenges of the 1990s.

28. Mr. MOTA SARDENBERG (Brazil) said he hoped that the relaxation of tension between East and West would encourage the international community to work together to improve the world economic and social situation. The world economy had undergone significant changes in recent decades, including a growth in the volume and value of international trade, an increase in financial flows and extraordinary advances in telecommunications technology. Those developments made interdependence the determining factor in the world economy. It was no longer possible to envisage a world made up of separate countries or groups of countries, indifferent to the fate of others. The integration of the countries of Eastern Europe reflected a universal principle that was equally valid for the developing countries. The integration of some countries should not lead to the marginalization of others.

29. The Government of Brazil, wishing to integrate its economy more fully with the world economy, had launched economic reform measures, including a far-reaching stabilization programme, a sharp and sustainable reduction of inflation and a set of structural changes intended to increase productivity (the deregulation of domestic markets and the opening up of its markets to foreign trade and investment, for example). With regard to international trade, it appeared that the multilateral trading system established in recent decades was eroding. The success of the Uruguay Round was essential if the most-favoured-nation principle was to be respected. Furthermore, the efforts of developing countries towards efficiency and competitiveness must not be thwarted by protectionist barriers. In addition, the continuing deterioration of the terms of trade of commodity-exporting countries was cause for serious concern.

30. In the area of money and finance, the external debt burden hindered the efforts of developing countries towards economic recovery. It was widely recognized that financial transfers from developing to developed countries had reached absurd levels, and that the trend must be reversed as soon as possible, as could be seen from the Plan of Action adopted at the World Summit for Children and the international development strategy.

31. Consensus had been achieved, and a solution must be found without delay. The volume of debt and debt servicing must be reduced significantly so that debtor

(Mr. Mota Sardenberg, Brazil)

countries could revitalize their economies. Again, the costly and painful adjustment efforts of the developing countries must meet with a favourable response in the international context.

32. Another serious distortion in the modern world was caused by restrictions on the free flow of scientific and technological knowledge. Technological innovation was the very basis of development, and its benefits should not be reserved for certain regions only.

33. The question of the eradication of poverty deserved special attention. Indeed, there could be no economic growth without it. Any development policy must make it a priority to raise the standard of living of the whole population, and in particular that of the poorest segments, and to ensure the best possible distribution of income. A pattern of growth must be defined which would offer the poorest people an opportunity to increase their participation in the economy.

34. It was evident that the aggravation of poverty in Latin America was caused by economic stagnation. To address the problem, the Governments of Brazil and Argentina had agreed to establish a common market before December 1994, which Uruguay, Paraguay and Chile would later join.

35. Protecting the environment while promoting economic development was a major challenge to be taken up by the international community. The principle of the division of responsibilities according to the respective capabilities of countries should be taken as the starting-point. Since environmental protection was a global concern, it was important that the strategies proposed should not selectively address only certain aspects. Brazil was pleased to be hosting the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at Rio in 1992.

36. All the problems he had mentioned required resolute joint action by the international community. International co-operation was essential if the world economy was to be further integrated. Multilateralism in international economic relations must be strengthened, and the Uruguay Round should ensure the preservation of the multilateral trade system.

37. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council had a major role to play. The effectiveness which the Organization had achieved in the political sphere should also be assured in its economic and social activities. The Declaration adopted at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly and the international development strategy had given practical expression to a global consensus which should lead to increased co-operation, common understanding and a sense of responsibility, which were essential if the serious problems of the times were to be addressed. It was increasingly evident that the countries of the North and the countries of the South no longer regarded themselves as separate, and that the interdependence of the modern world required common goals for the two groups of countries. It was to be hoped that the work of the Second Committee would contribute to that understanding.

38. Mr. ALTAMIMI (Bahrain) regretted that the radical changes in the political arena had not been accompanied by the economic change which would make it possible to address the serious problems of the world, especially those of the developing countries.

39. The 1980s had been a lost decade. For the developing countries, the deterioration in the international economic situation had had catastrophic consequences: they had been unable to sustain stable growth, their share of international trade had decreased, the standard of living of their people had continued to decline, and they had been forced to reduce considerably their spending on education, health and social services to the detriment of their people, particularly the poorest segments of the population.

40. Currently, the most serious problem of the developing countries was that of debt. Since they were in the midst of economic stagnation, they faced insurmountable difficulties with regard to debt servicing, especially since other external factors (variations in exchange rates, a rise in interest rates and a decline in ODA) aggravated the situation still further. It was imperative that a common strategy should be established to relieve the debt burden and to increase the transfer of resources from developed to developing countries.

41. In effect, the developing countries were growing increasingly dependent on external aid. In that connection, he congratulated Kuwait, which had just decided to forgive the debt of certain debtor countries and which was studying the possibility of granting new loans on preferential terms. Kuwait had thus contributed to debt relief for several countries, even though it was currently under the yoke of occupation.

42. As far as international trade was concerned, the developing countries continued to suffer from protectionism and the non-application of the fundamental principles relating to most-favoured-nation treatment. More generally, the international economic imbalances which had widened in recent years, had had catastrophic repercussions for the developing countries. The international community should spare no effort to assist them.

43. He emphasized the problems and special needs of island or land-locked countries. Those countries required special attention, removed as they were from international markets and often dependent upon a single export product.

44. That did not mean that Bahrain wished to see one region develop at the expense of others. In an increasingly interdependent world, the development of all its regions must be ensured. The international community must draw up realistic economic policies that would create an environment conducive to global growth, and the developing countries should be able to take part in the establishment of the new international economic order.

45. He welcomed the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation adopted at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly and the agreement reached on the international development strategy. The adoption of the two texts augured well for the future of the work of the United Nations, and of the Second Committee in particular.

46. Mr. KULKARNI (India) said that two historic events, the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly and the finalization of the international development strategy, had renewed the dialogue on areas which were crucial to international co-operation for development. The recent international political developments had generated an enthusiastic response which, it was to be hoped, would redound to the benefit of the developing countries. The general feeling was that European integration would have a positive effect on other countries. On the other hand, the Gulf crisis had placed a heavier burden on developing countries like India. Higher oil prices and falling revenues from a region rendered unstable by the crisis were among the obstacles to be overcome.

47. More generally, the previous year's record of economic growth had been mixed. The expansion of world trade and output had slowed down, imbalances among the major economies continued and, to add to the concerns of the developing countries, the monetary situation remained unstable and interest rates had risen. All those problems, which compounded a generally inhospitable environment, had pushed the developing countries even further out of the mainstream of international economic affairs. The growth in developed market economies over the previous decade had not had repercussions in the South, where the slow down had been one of the sharpest in recent years, with growth declining from 4.5 per cent to about 3.4 per cent.

48. Meanwhile, the developing countries were not exempt from more long-standing problems. In the case of debt, only a comprehensive solution could be a lasting one. There was also the problem of the stagnation of ODA in real terms, which remained well below the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of GNP. Commercial flows to developing countries were declining, resources were being transferred in the wrong direction, commodity prices were hovering around their lowest levels, protectionism continued to prevail and in some areas of development (like poverty alleviation and human resources development) the resources to make a real impact were lacking.

49. Two months away from the conclusion of the Uruguay Round, the developing countries still saw in it an opportunity to preserve and strengthen the international trading systems and achieve some progress in areas of direct interest to them.

50. Technology had become a vital determinant of development. Regrettably, new barriers to technology transfer were being erected in the name of protection of intellectual property or confidentiality. The asymmetry there must be removed by offering developing countries fair terms and facilitating their access to technologies of crucial significance to their economies.

51. Environmental issues were increasingly important, and the United Nations conference to be held in 1992 would be an event of great significance. Development issues could not, however, be dissociated from environmental concerns, which must therefore be addressed within the framework of the United Nations and not within a certain group which did not sufficiently reflect the needs and concerns of the developing countries. It was now accepted that environmental protection required the provision of additional funds and also the transfer of environmentally sound technology to the developing countries. Any regulatory mechanism would have to be accompanied by the requisite funding of technology transfers.

(Mr. Kulkarni, India)

52. The operational activities of the United Nations were no less important, and India wished to see a substantial increase in the resources allocated to them. If a larger portion of those activities were entrusted to local personnel, they would inevitably be less costly to execute and optimum use could be made of local expertise. The main thrust of operational activities must be towards endogenous capacity-building and self-reliance.

53. Finally, many energy-importing countries had been rudely reminded of the importance of energy supply for economic growth. For the developing countries with wildly fluctuating energy bills, it was more than ever necessary to develop or draw upon new and renewable sources of energy.

54. Mrs. DUEÑAS DE WHIST (Ecuador) said that many of the factors that had dominated the 1980s had undergone substantial change, and mankind was entering what might be termed an embryonic, yet promising, phase. That did not mean that the factors of instability, which were now well known, had disappeared. To judge from the statements in the General Assembly, international co-operation and understanding were conducive to a genuine implementation of the provisions of the Charter in the field of peace and security. However, the critical economic and social problems of the developing countries remained to be solved, and that called for a redefinition of the concepts of co-operation and solidarity at times of crisis. To begin with, it must be noted that peace was not the absence of war. It was first and foremost an individual and collective decision to live in harmony. Development problems must also be redefined in the contemporary world. Their true historical, economic, social and cultural causes were not fully understood. The concepts of poverty and development were obscured by a system of perception in which the weak surrendered and accepted the image imposed on them by the strong.

55. At a previous meeting, a new agenda had been proposed for the Second Committee and, more generally speaking, for the United Nations. Ecuador saw that proposal as a reflection of the historical and political development of the member countries of the European Economic Community. It required above all else considerable political, economic, social and even cultural homogeneity, and could not be considered for universal application for another half-century or more. On the other hand, the Charter of the United Nations had been born of the lessons of a very recent past and had fostered universal participation by nations and equality among them. For that reason, her delegation was greatly disturbed by the emerging trend to distort the terms of the Charter and alter its universal scope through a reform of the Economic and Social Council, turning the United Nations into a club of rich administrators. Clubs of that kind, which did so much harm to the peoples they administered, were only too familiar.

56. Finding a solution to the problem of development was a highly complex matter. One of the primary obstacles was the lack of political will on the part of all those who were affected by the major challenge which history posed to peace and security. A second obstacle was the lack of the will to overcome, gradually but resolutely, the root causes of instability and crisis - failing which, peace would remain an illusion and security would be born of fear. There must be a radically different perception of the links between peace, security and economic and social development.

57. Mrs. THORPE (Trinidad and Tobago) said that the numerous causes of the development crisis in the South had been identified some time ago, many having been inherited from the last decade. That was true of, inter alia, the problems of the debt crisis and of environmental degradation. Thus, in order to address the concerns of developing countries, the discussion had to be held on a new level. Authentic development was a holistic and multi-dimensional process, with human beings at its centre.

58. Progress was particularly difficult for island countries because of the high per capita cost of developing and maintaining essential infrastructures, and the situation was even worse in archipelagos. Such constraints were not always obvious, since the measure of economic growth was still based on gross national product (GNP), while scant attention was paid to the impact of economic activity on the environment or to the basic expenditures in areas such as health, education and social welfare.

59. The size of their domestic markets prevented the small countries benefiting from economies of scale. In order to sell their products, they had to turn to external markets. That was not easy, considering that the countries of the North had, for purposes of protectionism, erected trade barriers which were literally strangling the small economies. The reduction in export earnings due to the deterioration in the terms of trade and the difficulty of gaining access to markets, combined with a net outflow of resources resulting directly from debt service, had brought about a decline in the standard of living and an increase in poverty. As the economies of the North were enjoying their longest period of post-war growth, those of the South were deteriorating. Social upheavals were not uncommon in the South and there was a risk of militant elements of the population engaging in subversion. Such serious threats to the peace and security of the small States had to be averted. To do so, adequate support was needed to complement the national measures, undertaken at great sacrifice.

60. The Declaration adopted by the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly demonstrated the existence of a collective political will to resolve the problems of the developing countries. It was important to monitor the implementation of the commitments made and to preserve the global political momentum developed at that session.

61. The Uruguay Round negotiations must be brought to a successful conclusion in order to strengthen the international system and enter a new era of free trade. That could only be achieved by taking into account the problems of developing countries, in particular the smallest among them, and by respecting the commitments made during the negotiations (especially with regard to eliminating non-tariff trade barriers). The North American Free Trade Agreement and the restructuring of Europe by the end of 1992 represented important developments for world trade, since they would foster the economic integration of the two largest markets of the North. The positive aspects of those developments should be emphasized, avoiding any negative effects on the Uruguay Round, which could be viewed as part of a larger effort to revitalize multilateralism.

(Mrs. Thorpe, Trinidad and Tobago)

62. The most pressing problem was a financial one: the net transfer of resources was from the South to the North, with no indication that the trend would reverse itself in the immediate future. Action had to be taken on three levels. The first level was debt reduction; the indebtedness of the small middle-income countries had to be integrated into a revised strategy which was more appropriate to the situation. The second level consisted of increasing direct foreign investments in developing countries. Trinidad and Tobago had already implemented measures to encourage such a trend. However, the developed countries also needed to contribute, for example, through the use of incentives. On the third level, the Bretton Woods institutions needed to play a greater role in view of the fact that the commercial banks no longer occupied centre stage.

63. The revolutionary advances in several areas of science and technology to which the North had been witness during the past decade had opened up new opportunities in agriculture, medicine, industry and communications. There was, unfortunately, an ever-widening gap in technology between the North and the South, even if the technological obsolescence of the South was disregarded. Measures were needed to revive the North/South flow, strengthen the capacities of the developing countries and facilitate their access to technological innovations.

64. Any threat to the environment was a threat to mankind. The first concern should be to use modern science to achieve economic growth and promote development, within a sustainable ecological framework. Efforts should therefore be made to develop and use environmentally sound technology and to intensify research and development activities in the area of sustainable development. For its part, Trinidad and Tobago had demonstrated its commitment to the protection and enhancement of the environment by offering to host in October 1990 the Seventh Ministerial Meeting on the Environment in Latin America and the Caribbean. Her country was also concerned about the conservation and management of marine resources and had imposed a strict ban on large-scale drift-net fishing in its territorial waters. The enforcement of the ban would be monitored by a tripartite team composed of conservationists, fishermen and State agencies.

65. Mr. GHEZAL (Tunisia) expressed concern about the marginalization of the developing countries in general, and of the African continent in particular. The debt crisis, the negative net transfer of financial resources, the decline in commodity prices, the increase in poverty, and the degradation of the environment had contributed dangerously to the erosion of the social structure in many countries and threatened the stability of the new world order, which otherwise held out great hope for peace and prosperity.

66. External indebtedness was threatening the efforts of developing countries to reactivate their economic growth; at a time when they needed a net inflow of financial resources, developing countries were, on the contrary, continuing to suffer from a serious loss of resources. That problem called for global urgent, far-reaching and effective global action for the international community, in particular from the Governments of creditor countries and from multilateal financial institutions, since the middle-income countries, such as Tunisia, were also in a precarious situation. The report by Mr. Bettino Craxi contained some

(Mr. Ghezal, Tunisia)

promising new ideas which his country endorsed: conversion of bilateral debt into equity; creation of a Mediterranean development bank; cancelling of the least developed countries' debt service; and the setting up of a new 30 to 40 year repayment schedule.

67. While the international community was rightly concerned about environmental problems, it should be pointed out that the contribution of the developing countries to those problems was negligible in comparison with that of the industrialized nations, which however possessed the technological and financial means to resolve them. It was that situation that led the developing countries to hope that the developed countries would provide them with financial resources and free access to the appropriate technologies for environmentally sound development. Tunisia attached great importance to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in 1992, which should open the way for the implementation of global, collective and concerted action to combat the threats to the environment.

68. The erosion of the multilateral trading system in the 1980s as a result of unilateral and protectionist trends had placed a severe strain on the fragile balance of payments of most developing countries. The Uruguay Round was the most ambitious and complex set of negotiations ever organized within the framework of GATT and reflected the commitment of the international community to an open, stable trading system. Restoring the confidence of all contracting parties in that system was all the more necessary because many countries were in the midst of a structural adjustment process, which entailed heavy social sacrifices. His delegation hoped that the negotiations would be successful. It feared, however, that a lack of transparency might compromise the efforts undertaken almost a decade earlier. The establishment of an international trade organization was certainly an appealing idea, but it must be considered with prudence and without undue haste.

69. The United Nations must preserve its role as the universal forum for the consideration of development questions. Since the revival of multilateralism was the best guarantee that it would be able to adapt to the new international order emerging from the end of the cold war. The Declaration of the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly reaffirmed the Organization's role in the economic sector. It established that economic co-operation must be based on mutually beneficial interdependence in a world economic climate more conducive to development, i.e., more stable and more predictable. Moreover, the international development strategy which had recently been adopted defined the scope of priority activities and established the methods and instruments of international co-operation. Regional economic integration, one of the basic premises of the international economic reality, continued to arouse both hope and disquiet. It was important to prevent the establishment of groups by excluding trading partners. On the contrary, such groups should be the embodiment of measures to facilitate economic changes at times not easily attainable by a single country. The efforts made by the five countries of the Maghreb to forge the Arab Maghreb Union on a sound and healthy basis were reflective of that spirit. The Union was beginning to get its bearings among the major regional groups and hoped to promote open, fruitful co-operation with all nations and all regional groups, particularly those of the Mediterranean region.

70. Mrs. BERNARDIN (Haiti) noted that the ideological debate was becoming less shrill, the trend towards polarization of regional conflicts less pronounced and that an improved political climate was slowly permeating international relations. Even so, there were still many hotbeds of tension. Freedom and democracy were progressing the world over, but the living conditions of the better part of humanity had worsened dramatically. For a great many developing countries, particularly the countries known as the least developed countries, the 1980s had been characterized by a worsening economy, social tensions and a deteriorating environment.

71. In the face of the growing complexity of the problems to which the third world was exposed - which might well affect the chances for a lasting peace - there was an urgent need to look at the political machinery which had caused the tremendous waste of the 1980s. The volume of official aid had fallen short of the fixed target, the share of external contributions in the overall GDP of the LDCs had dropped. Contributions of resources were shrinking and essential co-operation programmes were being frozen (for highly questionable reasons, invoked unilaterally and selectively by the donors) at a time when the very vulnerable economies of the LDCs required stable, predictable, official development assistance (ODA). Structural adjustment programmes had been rigorously implemented at the expense of essential social services and productive investments. Commodity prices had depreciated in the foreign markets, and access to those markets was becoming increasingly difficult. Debt service absorbed a large share of export earnings. Population growth remained a major problem.

72. In Haiti, the economy's poor performance in the 1980s was a cruel illustration of those problems. Real per capita income had declined, unemployment had increased in the industrial sector, as had underemployment in agriculture. Private investments had declined owing to the climate of political instability, while official investments had been set back by the decrease, or complete drying up, of external assistance. Shrinking exports had brought on serious balance-of-payments difficulties and foreign exchange shortages. In that context, recovery measures had yielded poor results and the structural adjustment programme conceived in 1986 had been thwarted and even suspended at the end of 1987 because of non-participation by institutions for bilateral and multilateral assistance. The worsening of the economy was also attributable to an inability to deal properly with external shocks, and the fact that the growth rate of the GDP was still trailing the rate of population growth (1.5 per cent) and levels of consumption in 1987 were much lower than they had been in 1980.

73. The Government had two overall objectives for the decade: reduction of poverty and social injustice, promotion and development of human and natural resources and preservation of Haiti's cultural identity. The economic option remained a liberal option compatible with the national interest, one in which priority was accorded to the agricultural sector and additional special measures were taken for the other sectors. From a social perspective, the Government was seeking to make the men and women of Haiti veritable economic, social and political agents. At the institutional level, it was attempting to achieve decentralization in order to stimulate grass-roots participation in decision-making.

(Mrs. Bernardin, Haiti)

74. Her delegation shared the profound concern of the authorities and Member States of the United Nations in the face of the major social and economic issues of the decade. World poverty remained very serious and development had fallen off in vast areas. No task could be more urgent than the establishment of a new international economic order guaranteeing the basic right of all human beings to live free from hunger, poverty, ignorance, disease and fear. That would require a significant increase in ODA; the establishment of a system of international co-operation which took into account the specific problems of the most vulnerable countries and those most severely affected by the crisis, particularly the LDCs; special support for coping with the substantial increase in the energy bill; an equitable settlement of the question of external debt; the restructuring of multilateral institutions whose role in development financing must be fully in accordance with the objectives of the United Nations; a revival of South-South co-operation and regional integration; and, lastly, the entry into force of the Common Fund for Commodities.

75. Her delegation paid tribute to the many efforts being made in various places. They were examples of international solidarity as it was meant to be. Thus, the new programme of action adopted at the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Paris, the debt-cancellation measures announced, particularly by France, were positive examples from that standpoint. Lastly, her delegation fervently hoped for the success of the Uruguay Round, which should have the effect of stimulating the liberalization of trade and strengthening multilateralism.

76. Mr. ALAMRI (United Arab Emirates) said that for the past several months, international relations had been progressing towards a depolarization that promised to have positive repercussions on the world economy. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, however, was a set-back, made all the more serious because Kuwait had formerly granted considerable assistance to many developing countries, and was no longer able to do so. Worse still, the invasion had halted Kuwait's development, as Iraqi occupation authorities continued to dismantle Kuwait's economic infrastructure.

77. His delegation supported the statement made by the representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77; however, although the primary responsibility for tackling development problems lay with the developing countries themselves, the industrialized countries were none the less obligated to increase their aid to the third world, inasmuch as they possessed the necessary scientific and technical means, and were the ones who determined the evolution of the world economy. Those countries were therefore called upon to consider the repercussions which their policies could have on those of other countries. At the same time, developing countries should be involved in the decision-making process in international organizations.

78. With regard to the problem of hunger and malnutrition, it was necessary to provide direct assistance in kind to the persons affected, and to help the Governments of the countries concerned to successfully implement their development programmes, thereby furnishing the means by which they could provide for their own needs.

(Mr. Alamri, United Arab Emirates)

79. Protectionism and restrictive trade practices were hindering international trade and paralysing economic development, notably in those developing countries that were heavily dependent on export earnings. It was to be hoped that the creation of a single European market would not result in additional restrictions on products from non-member countries.

80. Foreign debt was one of the most serious problems facing developing countries, since much of their revenue went to servicing their debt thereby reducing the resources available for development. It was therefore important to support the proposals contained in the declaration adopted by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 at their fourteenth annual meeting. His delegation also was pleased to hear that the member States of the European Economic Community were prepared to consider the question of debt at the current session. Consideration would doubtless be given to measures to allow debtor countries to successfully implement their development programmes while ensuring the servicing of their debt, as well as to a borrowing system based on the principle of profit- and risk-sharing.

81. Science and technology were vitally important to the industrial and agricultural development of developing countries. It was therefore essential to facilitate the transfer of technology to those countries. In their declaration, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 had indicated their willingness to initiate new negotiations on the International Code of Conduct on the Transfer of Technology. That proposal should meet with a favourable response, and his delegation supported the plans for an international conference for the purpose of adopting the Code.

82. Developments in Eastern Europe offered new opportunities for investment, and should lead to an intensification of international exchanges. Those should be encouraged, but without prejudice to other countries. His delegation had been reassured on that subject by the statement of the representative of the European Economic Community.

83. Since its independence, the United Arab Emirates had sought to play a positive role on the world economic scene. In addition to official development assistance, it had established the Abu Dhabi Fund for Arab Economic Development, which granted concessional loans. In its petroleum policy, it always considered the interests of the world economy, as evidenced by its attitude during the current crisis in its region.

84. Mr. AWOONOR (Ghana) supported the statement of the Chairman of the Group of 77, and said that he proposed to discuss development problems from an African perspective. Africa had many causes for concern. In most African countries incomes had declined in absolute terms, and the number of people living in poverty was increasing faster in Africa than on other continents. Nevertheless, several African countries, in response to the calls of industrialized countries and international financial institutions, or on their own initiative, had introduced extensive structural adjustment and policy reforms which had imposed heavy sacrifices on their societies, in the hope of a better future. Ghana was one of

(Mr. Awoonor, Ghana)

the African countries which had pursued structural adjustment with determination and perseverance and the economy had shown signs of recovery. On the whole, however, the economies of African countries had sunk deeper into decline, while the industrialized countries had experienced seven years of sustained growth and prosperity.

85. The eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, the Paris Conference on the least developed countries, and the work of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole for the Preparation of the International Development Strategy represented attempts to address the problems of developing countries. However, his delegation felt that the nature and magnitude of the development challenges to be met had not been fully appreciated, as was evident from the excessive emphasis placed by industrialized countries on the responsibility of developing countries for their own development. Developing countries had never denied that responsibility, but had pointed out that the policies followed by the industrialized countries had created an unfavourable international economic environment, and that sound national policies must be complemented by a healthy international economic environment.

86. Despite the initiatives of the Toronto summit and the Paris Club, Africa remained encumbered with debt, the stock of which had increased from a few billion dollars in 1982 to over $250 billion in 1990. Many of the creditors were multilateral financial institutions, which generally did not reschedule debts. A number of African countries no longer had access to the resources of IMF, and their access to other external credit, particularly commercial banks, was therefore effectively curtailed. While multilateral financial institutions had established new facilities, those facilities had been inadequate to meet the growing needs of the poor countries, and conditionalities had made access to the facilities difficult. The flow of official development assistance had stagnated over the years. With the exception of the Nordic countries, the richest countries had not attained half of the established target (0.7 per cent of gross national product). However, structural adjustment programmes required an adequate flow of resources so that growth-oriented policies could be pursued. Many African countries had adopted investment codes offering generous incentives to investors, but without substantial results. Africa had suffered from adverse terms of trade: structural adjustment programmes had expanded the commodities sector, but increased output had created a glut that had forced prices downward. The existing compensatory mechanisms (stabex and compensatory financing facility of IMF) should be revamped, since, in terms of comparative advantage, it would be beneficial to all if the processing of commodities such as cocoa were shifted from the North to the South. Implementation of the Integrated Programme for Commodities should stabilize the commodity markets.

87. The changes in Central and Eastern Europe promised to create opportunities which Africa should not ignore. It must take the need for economic integration more seriously, since it was the only region where intraregional trade represented an insignificant percentage of overall trading activities. Africa's trade was oriented towards external markets, which made it very vulnerable to external shocks. Practical measures, such as the construction of trans-African highways and telecommunications facilities, would promote economic integration. However, production and consumption patterns must change to foster self-reliance. The

(Mr. Awoonor, Ghana)

establishment of subregional economic groups (ECOWAS and SADCC) and the agreement for the establishment of an African economic community were encouraging, but the former colonial Powers should modify their traditional attitudes and perspectives, and recognize the right of the African nations to resolve their development problems without undue hindrance. Strengthened international co-operation, in which the developed countries manifested a true spirit of partnership, was essential to African development.

88. The CHAIRMAN announced that the general debate had ended.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-FIFTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
10th meeting
held on
11 October 1990
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 10th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece)

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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMITMENTS AND POLICIES FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION AGREED UPON IN THE DECLARATION ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION, IN PARTICULAR THE REVITALIZATION OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMITMENTS AND POLICIES FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION AGREED UPON IN THE DECLARATION ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION, IN PARTICULAR THE REVITALIZATION OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (A/45/3, chap. III, sect. F)

1. Mr. NAVAJAS-MOGRO (Bolivia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries was an important achievement, and the international community should implement, as soon as possible, the specific policies and measures which that document prescribed. That was the only way to ensure the effectiveness of international co-operation for development which should develop in an environment conducive to the progress of the world economy and characterized by the accelerated growth and development of the developing countries.

2. Although more than five months had passed since the adoption of the Declaration, there had as yet been no significant changes in the situation of the developing countries. According to information provided by the Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs, in 1990 the economic growth of the developing countries would be at its lowest since 1983 and would not exceed 2 per cent, which meant a negative per capita growth. Moreover, there was no evidence of a considerable increase in resources from multilateral agencies, intended to offset the adverse effects of the stabilization and structural adjustment programmes currently being carried out in most developing countries, nor was there any clear evidence of progress in eradicating extreme poverty and hunger in many countries. Despite the efforts of the international community to reduce the external debt of the developing countries, according to recent projections made by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) those countries' total debt would increase by 9 per cent between 1990 and 1991 and, by the end of 1991, it would amount to $US 1.354 billion. Moreover, in 1990 the commodity-exporting countries had witnessed an 8 per cent drop in the prices of their commodities, while in 1989 the official development assistance from the developed to the developing countries had fallen by 2 per cent in real terms. Finally, after the first substantive meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Nairobi in August 1990, it could be said that the progress of negotiations on that subject had been rather slow, especially with regard to the provision of new and additional financing and the unrestricted access to environmentally sound technologies and the transfer of such technologies on a concessional, preferential and unconditional basis.

3. In the light of that discouraging state of affairs, urgent measures must be taken to ensure that the international community fulfilled the commitments it had made in the Declaration. The Group of 77 would introduce a draft resolution on the subject at the appropriate time. The recent consensus adoption of the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade

(Mr. Navajas-Mogro, Bolivia)

was clear proof of the desire of all States Members of the United Nations to contribute to more productive and efficient international co-operation for development. Since the Declaration and the international development strategy were essentially complementary, the Group of 77 hoped that the agreements reached by the international community in the development strategy would be implemented as soon as possible.

4. Mr. PETRONE (Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Community, said that human resources development had become the main focus of development strategies and policies for the 1990s. At the national level, countries should endeavour to restructure public budgets in order to place the emphasis on primary health care, primary education for all, and other social infrastructures. Specific consideration should be given to improving the status of women, who played a particularly vital role in the social and economic life of developing countries. A proper balance should be established between national policies, including economic and structural policies, and an international economic environment favourable to economic growth and development. No external assistance could offset ineffective national policies, as had been clearly demonstrated by the experience of the past decade.

5. The European Community welcomed the outcome of the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and reaffirmed their full endorsement of the Paris Declaration and the Programme of Action. The Twelve were committed to the effective implementation of the Programme of Action on the basis of a number of principles: namely, the primary responsibility of the least developed countries for formulating and implementing policies and priorities for their growth and development; emphasis on human resources development and popular participation; shared responsibility and strengthened partnership; the need for adequate external support to the least developed countries from the developed countries; and the need to undertake commitments measurable and transparent enough to enable monitoring and assessment.

6. The World Summit for Children had drawn attention to the most urgent problems of children and mothers, and had recorded the commitments made by world leaders to implement national policies and co-operate with other countries to improve the condition of children all over the world. The participants in the Summit had recognized that the development of human resources was the corner-stone of development strategies for the 1990s. An appropriate follow-up of the Summit should be conducted at the national and international levels in order to ensure that the commitments made at the highest political level were implemented.

7. The international development strategy for the fourth United Nations Development Decade was the most recent example of the follow-up and implementation of the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation. The document on the strategy provided a number of guidelines for action which should be adapted to specific national situations, and emphasized the opportunity offered by the current détente in international relations for reducing military spending world-wide and allocating larger amounts of resources to combat world poverty.

(Mr. Petrone, Italy)

8. Progress had been made at the Nairobi meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Environmental problems such as climate change, ozone depletion, deforestation, marine pollution and the loss of biological diversity could not be solved without closer and more effective international co-operation and concerted action. The Conference was one of the most important and challenging events of international economic co-operation in the 1990s. The link between environment, population and development was crucial for the development strategies of the decade, and the European Community looked forward to the successful preparation of the Conference.

9. The dramatic events in the Persian Gulf region and their repercussions on the world economy had raised serious concerns about prospects for economic growth. The European Community had decided to provide financial assistance to the countries most immediatly affected by the Gulf crisis. In particular, the Twelve would provide short-term financial assistance in the amount of 1.5 billion European Currency Units (ECU) to Egypt, Jordan and Turkey. The Community would also consider the possibility of providing economic assistance to other countries seriously affected by the crisis. The Twelve had also allocated 130 million ECU to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees from the crisis area, and welcomed the measures taken by international financial institutions to provide financial assistance to refugees.

10. The United Nations and its specialized agencies should play a key role in the process of follow-up and implementation of the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation. However, in order to enable the Organization to assist the international community in meeting the challenges of the 1990s and, more specifically, the needs of the developing countries, its functioning in the economic and social fields needed to be improved.

11. The Twelve believed that the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly should conduct a political review of the implementation of both the international development strategy and the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation.

12. Mr. KÄÄRIÄ (Finland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the commitments contained in the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation were the result of a realistic assessment of past developments and the current international situation. The Nordic countries were pleased that the Declaration clearly indicated the respective responsibilities of the various partners in development, including the developing countries, the industrialized countries and the United Nations agencies and international financial institutions. The recognition of environmental concerns and issues related to human resources development added to the realism of the Declaration. The Declaration in itself outlined only broad principles for national policies and international co-operation; their validity would be tested by the commitment of individual developing countries to formulating their policies and setting priorities, and by the international community's commitment to supporting the developing countries.

(Mr. Kääriä, Finland)

13. The Nordic countries believed that macro-economic adjustment accompanied by structural reforms were necessary but not sufficient to combat poverty effectively. The new economic policies, coupled with domestic income generation, should aim at a more equitable distribution of income. More efficient and affordable ways of providing social services must be found, and policies in the social field, including those for education, health, family planning, housing and social security, must be strengthened. In addition, the vital principles of democracy, human rights and mass participation of both men and women must be placed high on the agenda of national policies.

14. Many developing countries lacked the institutional capacity to carry out the required changes. The World Bank and IMF provided both advice and financial assistance with regard to the formulation and implementation of economic policies. The United Nations had an important role to play in the implementation of the commitments and policies of the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation and the international development strategy for the 1990s. The Organization was particularly well qualified to lead the way in human development in its broad sense, and in combatting poverty. However, in order for it to provide the required institutional support and policy advice, the institutional set-up of the United Nations system must be reviewed and adapted. The Nordic countries were willing to co-operate fully in that respect.

15. Mr. DJOGHLAF (Algeria) said that the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation identified several practical steps: a speedy and lasting solution to the developing countries' external debt problem, together with its corollary of negative net transfer of financial resources; injections of outside capital under advantageous conditions to meet the developing countries' growth needs; improvement in the international economic environment by reducing global imbalances and taking the interests of the developing countries into account when agreeing on macro-economic policies; the establishment of an open and fair trading system and support for the developing countries' efforts to diversify and modernize their economies; the adoption of a long-term view of the process of development which went beyond short-term adjustments; support for the developing countries' efforts to develop local scientific and technical capabilities; support for the process of regional economic integration; and enhancement of the role of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system in the economic recovery of the developing countries.

16. That political commitment would not have any effect, however, unless it was followed by practical measures. The seventh session of UNCTAD, in July 1987, had also had revitalization of economic growth and development as its sole objective, but 40 months later its final Declaration still had not been put into effect. It was reassuring to note that the draft international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade had been adopted unanimously, although it too would have to pass the test of actually being put into operation. It was essential that the political commitment entered into after the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly should be adhered to: it was extremely discouraging that, a bare few months after it had been adopted, the undertaking

(Mr. Djoghlaf, Algeria)

concerning additional transfers of resources on favourable terms to those developing countries which were taking environmental protection measures was apparently already being called in. Obviously, strict adherence to that commitment, and to the commitment on the transfer of technology under non-commercial conditions to the countries of the South, were essential to the success of the forthcoming Conference on Environment and Development. Having made a contribution before the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, the Second Committee now had a duty to make a further contribution after it, to ensure that its Declaration did not join those others which were still waiting to be put into effect.

17. Mr. MINAEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation was a major political document which consolidated the basic principles governing economic relations among States. The special session and the general debate in the Second Committee had demonstrated that Member States were increasingly open to economic co-operation which was based on partnership and free of the ideological baggage of the era of confrontation. The desire to overcome the economic division into North and South and East and West and to find effective ways of integrating national economies into the world economy was gradually gaining ground.

18. The Declaration was the first important United Nations document in which the international community unanimously supported the integration of the Eastern European countries into the world economy. In addition to favourable external conditions, that would require intense efforts on the part of the individual countries to carry out a radical restructuring of their economies and to make fundamental changes in their external economic relations. The Soviet Union was well aware of the scope and complexity of those tasks, and it attached paramount importance to their solution. The Supreme Soviet, including the Committee on Economic Reform of which he was the Secretary, was currently endeavouring to improve Soviet economic legislation. In its work, the Committee on Economic Reform made use of the expertise acquired by the bodies and organizations of the United Nations system.

19. In implementing of the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation, Member States and international organizations must pay particular attention to the specific measures required to ensure observance of the economic openness, the interdependence of national economies and the world economy, the development of macro-economic co-ordination with due consideration for the interests of all countries, access to modern environmentally sound technologies, the reduction by all countries of their military budgets as a means of accelerating the development of national economies and the world economy as a whole, and the responsibility of every State for its economic policies and their international consequences. The Secretary-General could, in consultation with the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC), formulate practical recommendations - both for Member States and for the entire United Nations system - on ways of implementing those principles.

(Mr. Minaev, USSR)

20. It would also be useful to review the implementation of the Declaration regularly, perhaps once or twice a year, at summer sessions of the Economic and Social Council and in the Second Committee. Co-ordination of the entire exercise would be facilitated by a joint meeting of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC), say in the next two or three years, to consider the issue. That was particularly important because many provisions of the Declaration presupposed the involvement of a large number of bodies and organizations of the United Nations system, including their secretariats in its implementation. Practical measures to implement the principles contained in the Declaration should be co-ordinated with the more general task of achieving the genuine universalization of all United Nations economic activities.

21. Mr. ZHANG Yesui (China) said that the adoption of the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation was a major event. At a time when most developing countries were faced with economic stagnation and decline, and a further widening of the gap between North and South, the Declaration represented a positive step towards strengthening international economic co-operation and dialogue. Whether or not it could play the role which had been intended for it would depend on whether or not it could be effectively implemented. All countries, and in particular the developed countries, had to make an effort to turn commitments and policies into actions. The specialized agencies of the United Nations system should in particular map out specific and feasible programmes for implementing the Declaration in their respective areas of work and report to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, either regularly or occasionally. China also hoped that the Secretary-General would continue to attach importance to the implementation of the Declaration.

22. Mr. WOLFF (Colombia) said that the developing countries hoped the commitments entered into by all parties in the Declaration of the eighteenth special session would become a reality. For those countries had committed themselves to implementing domestic policies which would allow them to control inflation, promote national savings, create conditions favourable to investment both domestic and from abroad, modernize their economies and increase their international competitiveness. The developed countries, for their part, had to make the structural changes which would restore balance to the international economy, and at the macro-economic level would take into account the interests and concerns of all countries, in particular the developing countries. All awaited with anticipation the actions which the developed countries would take to correct external and fiscal imbalances, promote non-inflationary sustainable growth, lower real interest rates, and make their markets and more accessible exchange rates more stable.

23. A review of the months following the approval of the Declaration showed some positive signs, but also serious grounds for anxiety. The decision of the majority of the developing countries to implement painful adjustment programmes had not met with a corresponding response on the part of the developed world. Virtually nothing had been done to correct the internal imbalances of the major economies. For example, it was inexplicable that there were developed countries offering

(Mr. Wolff, Colombia)

speculative returns on capital of 12 or even 14 per cent, whereas their rates of inflation were no higher than 5 per cent. In the area of national policy, everyone, and not just the developing countries, had a great deal still to do.

24. The developing countries welcomed the announcement by the Government of the United States of some initiatives aimed at controlling its gigantic fiscal deficit. They also welcomed President Bush's announcement of the new initiative for the Americas. Unfortunately, there were other fronts where the situation was not so clear. The developing countries had opened in their economies, but there had been no matching response from the developed world. The painful process of the Uruguay Round was the best example of the lack of resolve to strengthen the exports of the developing countries. The ghost of protectionism and discrimination was prowling around the decision-making centres of the developed countries.

25. Efforts to solve the external debt problem were also of vital importance. If within the next two years no definitive and lasting solution to it was found, the Declaration of the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly would be quite meaningless.

26. With regard to the question of resources to finance the development of the developing countries, paragraph 27 of the Declaration stated that the developed countries should implement their undertakings to devote 0.7 per cent of their GNP to ODA and 0.15 per cent to the least developed countries. The reality in that area was frankly discouraging. Against a background of a financial bonanza, the developed countries, rather than increasing their financial assistance, had reduced its rate of growth. Only two months after the approval of the Declaration of the eighteenth special session, criteria for disbursement of aid were being applied which bore no relation to reality, much less to the priority of revitalizing the growth and development of the developing countries.

27. The poor of the world, the subject of so much talk, needed more action and less rhetoric, more decisions and fewer promises. Developed and developing countries alike had an obligation to live up to their commitments. They could not grant themselves the luxury of failing yet again.

28. Mr. CAMARA (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) said that the adoption of the Declaration by the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly was a milestone in the evolution of the global consensus on promoting international economic co-operation. Given the importance of agriculture in the economies of most developing countries, it had a major role to play in attaining the objectives of the Declaration. Many of FAO's programmes and activities contributed member States' efforts to achieve those objectives. For example, demand for technical assistance in the field of policy analysis and advice had increased considerably in recent years, as a result of the growing number of countries introducing structural adjustment programmes. FAO's work concentrated on: assessment of impacts of structural adjustment on the food and agricultural sector; assistance to countries in preparing for negotiations on adjustment programmes; sector/sub-sector policy and performance review; institution building;

(Mr. Camara, FAO)

training in agricultural analysis; and resource mobilization for investment in agriculture and the rural sector.

29. In co-operation with regional and subregional organizations, FAO also provided technical assistance of economic and technical co-operation among developing countries, while Field Programme activities included a regional assessment of comparative advantage in the production of selected agricultural crops/commodities.

30. Issues concerning agricultural trade policy were regularly discussed in FAO's Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP). Agricultural protectionism had been a major item on the Committee's agenda for over a decade. Through its Intergovernmental Commodity Groups, CCP monitored developments in trade policies, protectionism and action taken to reduce barriers to trade in many of the most important agricultural commodities. Recommendations of FAO's governing bodies regarding the multilateral trading system were in line with paragraph 32 of the Declaration.

31. FAO also gave technical support to the Uruguay Round, including the provision of statistics or analytical documents, and attendance at meetings of various Negotiating Groups, and provided technical assistance to countries in connection with the preparation of their views on matters under negotiation.

32. FAO's International Commodity Groups strongly supported the key role for commodity exports stressed in paragraph 33 of the Declaration. It was now very possible that, with the Common Fund for Commodities becoming operational, the International Groups would become involved, under the Second Account of the Common Fund, in the sponsorship of measures and projects in areas of research and development, productivity improvement and marketing of commodities.

33. The FAO Conference in November 1989 had given specific directives for strengthening FAO's programmes for the protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development. Together with the Government of the Netherlands, FAO was organizing a Conference on Agriculture and the Environment which would help to prepare FAO's inputs to the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development.

34. Mrs. ORTEGA (United States of America) said that the Declaration of the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly was a principled and far-reaching document, which called on member States to accelerate steps to promote international economic co-operation for sustained growth of the world economy and in particular the revitalization of economic growth and development of the developing countries. The fact that States had been able to achieve consensus on a strong, meaningful statement of that nature represented an important new step in the way they all viewed economic development. The United States supported implementation of the commitments and policies for international development co-operation agreed upon in the Declaration.

(Mrs. Ortega, United States)

35. The United States had recently taken steps indicative of its interest in implementing the type of measures prescribed by the Declaration. In June it had announced the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative, a new broad-based economic initiative for the 1990s based on the concept that prosperity in the hemisphere depended upon trade liberalization, increased investment and external debt relief. Countries of the region had responded enthusiastically to that innovative move to deal with the interrelated problems of trade, investment and debt.

36. The United States believed that the momentum in favour of economic reforms offered new hope for the developing countries' efforts to achieve sustained growth and development. It had joined the consensus on the Declaration as an expression of its desire for global harmony and its support for the aspirations of the developing world. Obviously, the world's many problems of growth and development had not been solved, but they were being addressed in a co-operative atmosphere which augured well for the future.

36. Mr. MINET (International Labour Organisation) said that ILO hoped to contribute to the revitalization of growth and development in the 1990s by considering specific measures to be implemented in fulfilment of the provisions of the Declaration, and in accordance with its basic mandate.

37. The question of human resources was a priority area for ILO, and specific programmes corresponding to various points in the Declaration were already under way. ILO would consider implementation of the Declaration at its meeting in February 1991, in the context of the implementation of the recently adopted international development strategy.

38. The Director-General of ILO, addressing the eighteenth special session, had said that the new climate of co-operation offered a unique opportunity for the specialized agencies within the United Nations to perform the functions for which they had been created. In view of the range of activities and responsibilities covered by the various agencies, it was essential for their activities to have the coherence and consistency at the international level which was advocated at the national level and for their activities to be better integrated in accordance with a common model which reconciled the need for economic rigour with that for greater social justice.

39. In line with the hope expressed by the Director-General for Development that the Declaration would inspire profound discussion and analysis of the issues in question and further consistency in dealing with economic and social policies, ILO urged international organizations to work towards a better alignment of their programmes.

40. Mr. SERSALE di CERISANO (Argentina) said, with reference to paragraph 22 of the Declaration on International Co-operation, that the major industrialized countries should seek ways of narrowing their monetary and trade imbalances which would benefit the developing countries. So far, only two solutions to the large trade deficit of the United States had been considered: monetary and fiscal

(Mr. Sersale di Cerisano, Argentina)

restriction measures in the country with the deficit, and increased spending in the countries with the surplus, Japan and Germany. Adoption of the favoured second alternative would lead to a further reduction in the savings rates of the poorer countries. Argentina wished to propose a third solution, namely, that by increasing investments in the countries most affected by the debt crisis, which were traditional clients for American exports of capital assets, the American trade balance could be corrected without decreasing the world savings rate. The outlook on that issue had not really improved since the recent meeting of the seven major industrialized countries, whose economic policies still took little account of the interests of the developing countries.

41. Argentina had embarked on a programme of structural adjustment in order to revitalize its economic growth. The adjustments included market reforms, privatization measures to stimulate the influx of foreign capital and the encouragement of private initiative for investment purposes. Those measures could only hope to succeed, however, in the context of appropriate efforts by the international community to resolve major macro-economic problems.

42. Turning to paragraphs 26 and 27 of the Declaration, he regretted that little progress had been made on the question of debt and development finance since the Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund. The Gulf crisis had further exacerbated the problem, causing the major industrialized countries to implement economic cutbacks in response to increased oil prices and resulting inflationary pressures. The rising interest rates and increased restrictions on trade in products of developing countries which were likely to result would directly affect those countries payment capacity, both by increasing the debt service burden and by reducing their export earnings. New finance mechanisms were needed to cushion the impact of the crisis on their economies.

43. While Argentina hoped for a successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, some countries were implementing policies that stifled liberalization of international trade and ran counter to the commitments made at Punta del Este. The granting of subsidies for certain agricultural exports and other protectionist practices were impeding the efforts of developing countries to implement the domestic policies called for by paragraph 23 of the Declaration.

44. Argentina believed that greater efforts must be made by all countries to achieve a market economy and economic openness and to eliminate all forms of protectionism. Certain countries had displayed a lack of consistency in that regard, promoting the market economy while protecting certain weak sectors of their own productive sector, and he noted that only the countries of the South had complied with their commitments to international economic co-operation.

45. Mr. TURIANSKIY (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the consensus adoption of the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation at the eighteenth special session had been made possible by recent major political reforms in the world. The new international climate had highlighted the importance of the interdependence of nations in economic and social development and had inspired

(Mr. Turianskiy, Ukrainian SSR)

States to show greater responsibility in confronting problems of a world-wide nature.

46. The Ukraine attached great significance to the consensus approach in the Declaration to the problems faced by Eastern Europe. The Declaration's call for the increased integration of the Eastern European countries in the world economic system was reflected in important political and legislative documents adopted by the Ukraine, placing its economy on the path of market reforms and promoting the self-determination of the Ukrainian SSR in all foreign economic activity.

47. His delegation stressed the urgent need, noted in the Declaration, for concerted efforts to help the developing countries resolve their economic and social problems. All countries must respect their commitments to international economic co-operation in order to ensure the harmonious integration of their economies into the world economy and their adaptation to the changes in the world economic order.

48. His delegation supported the priority given in the Declaration to the problems of external debt and the eradication of poverty in the developing countries. Those goals could only be achieved if the interests of all countries and regions were taken into account and harmonized with the pattern of socio-economic, trade and technological relations that prevailed in the world.

49. The Ukrainian SSR fully endorsed the Declaration's appeal both to Member States and to the Organization to implement comprehensive policies to protect and restore the environment and it hoped that the environmental provisions of the document, which had been confirmed in the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade, would produce tangible results in the interests of all nations.

50. His delegation welcomed the strengthened role played by the United Nations in international co-operation for the revitalization of economic growth in the 1990s, and hoped that the adoption of the Declaration would hasten the resolution of problems relating to the review of the structure and functions of the social and economic sector of the United Nations and to the enhancement of the efficiency of the Secretariat's work.

51. Mr. KULKARNI (India) said that the recent political changes in the world lent special significance to the eighteenth special session, which had raised hopes for a revival of international economic co-operation. The 1980s had seen a deterioration in living conditions in the developing countries and an exacerbation of their economic problems. It was therefore vital that the objectives of the Declaration should be vigorously put into practice.

52. Efforts to eradicate poverty were being hampered by an unfavourable international economic environment, and specific measures were needed to strengthen poverty relief programmes. More resources should be committed by the rich countries to the poor, for the eventual good of both. The plight of the poorer

(Mr. Kulkarni, India)

nations had been worsened by the Gulf crisis, adding to their strained economies the further burden of increased oil prices, the disruption of trade, the repatriation of their nationals and a general loss of revenues. While the industrialized countries had responded with enthusiasm to the resurgence of democracy in various parts of the world, there had been no overall increase in international development assistance to the poor countries.

53. India supported the Declaration's call for a growth-oriented solution of the debt problem, which would enable developing countries to contribute to, and not impede, the growth of the world economy. The protectionist practices adopted by some richer countries threatened to deprive the international trading system of the mutuality, buoyancy and flexibility it needed to prosper.

54. It was ironic that, in an age of increasing openness, some countries were reluctant to share their technology. A more liberal attitude to technology transfer was essential to enable the developing countries to modernize and to strengthen their capacity for growth. Without the necessary technological means, it would be impossible for developing countries to combat environmental degradation effectively. India therefore welcomed those recent agreements which had earmarked additional resources for environmental measures in developing countries, and believed that continued international co-operation was needed on all environmental concerns.

55. In conclusion, he noted that the interdependence of countries always worked to the benefit of the world as a whole. He hoped that such interdependence would apply not only to military strategy but would also arm States in their battles against poverty and underdevelopment.

56. Mr. VARGAS (Brazil) said that the principles and commitments embodied in the Declaration constituted the basis and the necessary reference for future negotiations on concerted action for the revitalization of economic growth and development. The adoption of the Declaration was indicative of the Organization's ability to conclude meaningful agreements in the economic field, and laid the groundwork for renewed efforts by the United Nations to strengthen international co-operation for development.

57. In view of the general agreement that multilateralism provided the best mechanism for advancing such co-operation, practical implementation of the Declaration was essential. Accordingly, his delegation supported Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/54, and believed that incorporating the principles of the Declaration in the work programmes of the agencies and programmes of the United Nations system would do much to strengthen the role of the Organization in the economic field. Given the representativeness of its membership, the Economic and Social Council should play a catalytic role in monitoring the implementation of the Declaration.

58. The General Assembly could contribute to that process by reflecting in its resolutions and decisions the political will of its members to undertake concrete

(Mr. Vargas, Brazil)

measures to meet the challenge of revitalizing the economic growth and development in the developing countries. No national policy could be successful if it was not backed up by a supportive international economic environment, and a serious effort to implement the Declaration would be a first step towards the creation of such an environment.

59. Mr. PAULINICH (Peru) said that the adoption of the Declaration by consensus marked the beginning of a new phase in international economic co-operation. He welcomed the international community's acknowledgement of the need to reactivate economic growth and development in the developing countries as a principal task for the 1990s. The achievement of that objective, however, would require the full implementation of the commitments and policies set out in the Declaration. The General Assembly must give the Secretary-General a broad mandate to monitor the implementation of the Declaration by Governments and other bodies and to report thereon to the Assembly at its forty-sixth session.

60. Any large-scale initiative to restructure or revitalize the economic and social sectors of the United Nations should reflect the spirit of the eighteenth special session and the recently adopted international development strategy.

61. Mr. VAN BRAKEL (Canada) said that the Declaration's full significance would become clear only after a number of years had passed and an assessment had been made of its implementation by Governments and multilateral organizations. It was nevertheless becoming evident that the Declaration marked a turning-point in economic discussions at the United Nations: gone was the stale rhetoric of the past, replaced by a new determination to find pragmatic approaches to the serious and complex problems of development.

62. The Declaration contained a number of important principles which should be borne in mind as the international community pursued its implementation. The first was the obvious principle that sovereign States had the primary responsibility for their own economic development. The second was that the international community should give appropriate support to sound economic policies of developing countries. A thorough discussion of what constituted a sound national policy lay at the heart of international co-operation. Clearly, diverse circumstances meant that different approaches would be required. However, broad approaches reflecting the need for external and fiscal balances, environmental sustainability and human resources development in democratic societies were currently being identified, and he welcomed the gradual convergence of views in the United Nations on economic policy, although much remained to be done to make the Organization a major player in that field.

63. The need for international co-operation and the means of carrying it out effectively were increasingly self-evident. The fact that world trade had grown nearly twice as fast as world output since the early 1970s indicated that countries and production systems were becoming more interdependent, a fact which was in keeping with the thrust of the Declaration. As a world economy in rapid transformation called for constant change on the part of all countries, the ability

(Mr. Van Brakel, Canada)

to adapt to change was central to development. Thus the real measures of the Declaration's success would be how well individual countries and the international community as a whole implemented the truths they had so clearly identified.

64. Mr. TAYEB (Saudi Arabia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said he wished to address the arguments put forward at the 9th meeting by the representative of the Iraqi régime which had invaded Kuwait. That representative's allegation that the Gulf region was currently under Western occupation was typical of a régime which relied on distortion to serve its own ambitious designs. Such allegations were indicative of the régime's evil intentions and of its contempt for the international community. In fact, 28 Arab and other friendly countries were present in the Gulf region to defend it at the request of the legitimate Governments of the region, with a view to preserving international order and the interests of all States and defending international security and human rights.

65. The Iraqi régime had brutal designs on the people and State of Kuwait, and the Iraqi Government's alleged willingness to distribute oil free of charge merely reflected the régime's contempt for the international community. It was in fact the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait that was responsible for the rise in the price of oil which was hampering the development efforts of the developing countries. Iraq's record of humanitarian assistance was in fact lamentable, with vast amounts of resources allocated for armaments rather than for assistance. The Iraqi Government was fighting its own people by plunging them into their second war in a decade. Saddam Hussein's real aim was to break the grip of the sanctions against his régime, but he would have to listen to the voice of reason and logic and dissipate the spectre of war if he wished to help the developing countries achieve their legitimate aims.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

66. Mr. WOLFF (Colombia) pointed out that many of the documents required for the discussion of agenda items 86 and 87, which would take place the following day, had not yet been issued. To discuss the items without the relevant documents reflected a lack of seriousness.

67. The problem of late documentation was a continuing one. In some cases, documents were ready for distribution yet unavailable to delegations; in other cases, delegations with friends in the Secretariat managed to receive advance copies. The issue was both serious and delicate, for the absence of documents impeded the work of the Committee.

68. The CHAIRMAN agreed that the problem was one of long standing. He intended to look into the matter and ascertain the reasons for the delay in the distribution of some documents. The Committee might wish to consider the problem in depth and take steps to correct it at a later date.

69. Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Committee) drew attention to document A/C.2/45/L.1/Add.1, on the state of preparation of documentation for the Committee, and indicated which documents would be available the next day for the debate on agenda items 86 and 87.

70. Mr. AGUILAR-HECHT (Guatemala) endorsed the remarks made by the representative of Colombia, and expressed particular concern that the report of the Secretary-General on the Special Plan of Economic Co-operation for Central America had not appeared.

71. The Secretary of the Committee had indicated that a number of documents would be issued on the following day, when the debate was supposed to begin. That situation was totally unacceptable. While he intended no criticism of the Chairman, he believed that the Committee's programme of work must be drawn up in accordance with the availability of documents.

72. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should begin its consideration of the items by taking up only those topics for which documents were available.

73. Mr. WOLFF (Colombia) said that if the Chairman was asking delegations simply to accept the status quo, his delegation would do so only under protest.

74. The CHAIRMAN said that some problems were beyond his power to solve. He was trying to deal with the immediate problem at hand and enable the Committee to continue its work on the following day.

75. Mr. BABA (Uganda) said it was his impression from the remarks that had been made that some documents were issued to suit the interests of certain delegations and that other documents were issued at the last minute to prevent thorough consideration of them before decisions were taken. He wished to know if his impression was accurate.

76. Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Committee) said that the Secretariat never issued documents selectively or in a manner designed to influence the Committee's decisions. The issuance of documents was not based on any political or other considerations.

77. Mr. KANE (Senegal) said he believed the "silent majority" in the Committee would share his disagreement with many of the comments that had been made. In fact, a number of speakers were prepared to speak at the Committee's next meeting, and no other delegation could decide whether or not they ought to speak. His delegation endorsed the suggestion made by the Chairman, and was confident that the relevant documents would in time be available to the Committee. Moreover, the Committee was merely going to conduct a general discussion of the items and would not be taking action on any draft resolution. Those who had doubts about the way documents were issued should keep their thoughts to themselves.

78. The CHAIRMAN appealed to the Committee not to politicize the issue, which was in fact a technical one.

79. Mr. HARRISON (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) endorsed the remarks made by the representative of Senegal and expressed support for the approach suggested by the Chairman to deal with the very real problem identified by the representative of Colombia.

(Mr. Harrison, United Kingdom)

80. The delay in the appearance of documents was the result of many problems, some arising within the Secretariat. However, the matter also lay in the hands of the Committee, which requested the Secretariat to produce far too much documentation. He therefore urged the Committee to exercise restraint in requesting reports of the Secretary-General.

81. Mr. FJAERTOFT (Norway) endorsed the remarks made by the representatives of Senegal and the United Kingdom and expressed his delegation's confidence in the Chairman and the Secretariat.

82. Mr. WOLFF (Colombia) said he wished to emphasize that his comments had not been intended as a personal attack on the Chairman; however, he was concerned at the suggestion by the representative of the United Kingdom that the developing countries were requesting too many reports. What procedure did the representative of the United Kingdom think the Committee should follow? He appeared to wish to change the Committee's methods of work.

83. Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Committee) said that the Secretariat regretted the late appearance of documents. The matter had been discussed in the Second Committee and in the Economic and Social Council for many years, which suggested that it was perhaps time to consider whether the Secretariat might not be facing a situation of documentation overload.

84. The CHAIRMAN said he would have preferred the passion displayed during the current exchange of views to have been directed towards discussion of the statements made during the general debate.

85. Mr. HARRISON (United Kingdom) said he wished to correct a misapprehension on the part of the representative of Colombia. He had not said that any particular group of countries was guilty of requesting reports; his own delegation had joined in the consensus on numerous draft resolutions calling for reports. His appeal had been intended for all delegations.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-FIFTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
11th meeting
held on
Friday, 12 October 1990
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 11th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece)

later: Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco)

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AGENDA ITEM 86: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE

(a) OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF CO-ORDINATOR

(b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (continued)

1. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that the Bureau had met to consider the matter of status of documentation, and had noted that a large number of reports had not yet been issued. An explanation had been requested from the Secretariat, which had been contacted at the highest level. The situation would require that changes be made in the dates on which the consideration of some agenda items had been scheduled.

2. Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Committee) gave further information on the documentation relating to agenda items 86 and 87, which were to be considered at the current meeting, and to items 79 and 12. Concerning the latter items, he suggested that their dates of consideration should be reversed, since all but two of the reports on item 12 had been issued. The problem of late documentation was not new; it arose each year. The Secretariat had to contend with an increasingly heavy work-load. In addition, at the current session, the situation had been made worse by constant Security Council meetings, whose documentation always took priority, and which had created a glut of work.

3. Mr. MUCHANGA (Zambia) agreed that it would be logical to reverse the dates of consideration of items 79 and 12. Regarding the reports on Angola (A/45/551) and on special assistance to front-line States and other bordering States (A/45/479), he would like their consideration to be postponed to the week of 22 October.

4. Mr. OSMAN (Somalia) requested that the consideration of document A/45/483 on assistance to his country, listed under item 89 (b) of the provisional agenda, should be postponed to a later date; that document had just been issued, and his delegation would like to have more time to study it in order to make helpful comments.

5. The CHAIRMAN said that he agreed to postpone the consideration of that report.

6. Mr. KOIKE (Japan) approved of the change in the dates of the consideration of agenda items 79 and 12, and asked whether items 12 (a) and 12 (1) would be taken up later.

7. The CHAIRMAN said that those two sub-items would be considered together at a later date.

8. Mr. BABINGTON (Australia) asked whether the change in the scheduling of items 12 and 79 would apply to all the meetings allocated to those two items.

9. The CHAIRMAN said that a revised programme of work would be distributed to Committee members at the following meeting.

10. Mr. MORAIS (Angola), pointing out that the report on international assistance for the economic rehabilitation of Angola (A/45/551) had just been issued, requested postponement of its consideration to a later date.

11. Mr. MISSARY (Yemen) said that he was concerned by the delays in publication of Committee documents, particularly the addendum to document A/45/358. He asked why assistance to his country had not been made the subject of a separate document, as was the case for a number of countries.

12. Mr. ADEI (United Nations Development Programme) said that he would provide further information on that subject in the statement he would make at the current meeting.

13. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should adopt the proposed changes to its programme of work.

14. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 86: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (A/45/224, A/45/598)

(a) OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF CO-ORDINATOR (A/45/3, A/45/271 and Corr.1-E/1990/78 and Corr.1)

(b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (A/45/3, A/45/358 and Add.1, A/45/479, A/45/483, A/45/505, A/45/547, A/45/562, A/45/566; A/C.2/45/2)

15. Mr. MAYRHOFER GRUNBUHEL (Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator), introducing the report on UNDRO activities in 1988-1989 (A/45/271), noted with concern that the frequency of natural disasters was growing and that communities were increasingly vulnerable because of the concentration of population and economic assets in urban and coastal areas. In addition, there appeared to be a correlation between environmental degradation, particularly global warming, and disasters such as cyclones, floods and drought.

16. Nevertheless, the new international situation had provided the opportunity to concentrate on the concept of security, a concept which must encompass the adoption of preventive measures against the threat of ecological disasters and natural disaster management. The strengthening of international co-operation in that area coincided with remarkable progress in science and technology which had assisted in mitigating the effects of disasters.

17. Where displaced persons in the Middle East were concerned, the consequences of the Gulf Crisis occupied the greater part of the Office's attention and resources. The situation had considerably improved, with the number of refugees in Jordanian camps falling from 100,000 to 4,600 persons, who should be leaving Jordan in the very near future. The United Nations system had responded well to an enormous challenge, considering that about 800,000 persons had fled Iraq and Kuwait since 2 August 1990. Jordan had taken the brunt of the crisis, having hosted more than

(Mr. Mayrhofer Grunbuhel)

600,000 displaced persons in transit, and had dealt with it admirably despite limited resources. Having already spent more than $50 million in that effort, Jordan had been obliged to request assistance from the Office of the Co-ordinator, who had launched an appeal to the international community. The response had been generous, with a total of $38 million in pledged contributions.

18. Mobilization and co-ordination of assistance, as well as disaster management in the field were the primary goals of UNDRO. To that end, the Office had held frequent meetings with representatives of donor and affected countries, NGOs and other United Nations agencies involved. It worked in liaison with the UNDP/UNDRO resident representatives in various refugee transit countries. Assistance and repatriation programmes had been implemented in Egypt, Iran, Syria and Turkey. The operation had encountered a number of problems, but co-ordination generally had proved to be effective, and UNDRO wished to thank the International Organization for Migration, WFP, UNICEF, UNRWA, WHO, UNHCR, the International Committee for the Red Cross, the Red Crescent, and Médecins sans frontières for their co-operation.

19. It was evident that recently the distinction between natural and man-made disasters had become increasingly blurred. In both instances, it was imperative to intervene rapidly and effectively in order to alleviate the suffering of the victims and the techniques of co-ordination and assistance were similar. It was more relevant to distinguish between sudden and "slow-moving" disasters. Pre-disaster planning was essential in order to reduce the effects of disasters.

20. General Assembly resolution 44/236, in which the 1990s were designated the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, reaffirmed the mandate of UNDRO, assigning it a special role in the implementation process. That mandate called for a preventive approach through disaster mitigation. UNDRO had always striven for the implementation of practical measures to reduce disasters and their impact. Thus, it considered that the Decade represented a political recognition of one of its major concerns, and that it should further intensify its efforts. UNDRO already had played a major role in the preparatory phase and was determined to spare no effort to ensure the success of the Decade.

21. The three elements of a successful disaster mitigation campaign referred to by the Co-ordinator two years previously remained valid and included an international strategy, international solidarity and efficient co-ordinated relief action. Provision was made for the strategy within the framework for the Decade. In that connection, UNDRO insisted that the success of the Decade depended upon the integration of disaster mitigation into national development plans. On the basis of that conviction, the Office had made considerable efforts to strengthen its co-operation with UNDP. The two organizations had embarked on a joint training strategy and were soon to issue a disaster management manual. A further priority for UNDRO was the development of its information-management and office-support systems.

22. International solidarity, the second element of a successful campaign, had been impressively demonstrated recently on the occasion of the disaster relating to

(Mr. Mayrhofer Grunbuhel)

the evacuees from Iraq and Kuwait and the earthquakes in Iran and Armenia. The number of donors was increasing as was the size of their contributions. It was, however, necessary to mention two problems, the first of which was the problem of forgotten disasters. For example, the crisis in the Gulf had overshadowed the catastrophic situation in Liberia. Secondly, Governments found it easier to contribute to relief operations than to prevention and preparedness activities. That attitude should be changed to conform with the philosophy underlying the Decade, which was to invest now in order to reduce damage and the need for relief later on. Support of UNDRO was an expression of the kind of solidarity required. The report under review made it clear that the resources available to UNDRO were inadequate. Assistance from the international community was thus essential for keeping the activities of UNDRO at their current level and then for exceeding that level in terms of the efficiency and diversification needed if UNDRO was to fulfil its mandate.

23. The third element was related to the rapid co-ordination of relief. The UNDRO situation reports, which were distributed by a computerized system to several hundred addressees, were very useful in that regard. The improvement of information as the central mechanism of co-ordination was a constant concern of UNDRO, particularly in respect of the work done by the United Nations International Emergency Network, whose activities were complemented by the work done in connection with disaster communications, as evidenced by the International Conference on Disaster Communications organized by UNDRO in March 1990. It was also essential to ensure the credibility of the information disseminated, which required close co-operation in the assessment of damage and needs with UNDP, other United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and donor countries and a constant effort on the part of UNDRO to improve the professionalism of its staff and to enhance its procedures.

24. Although disaster relief and mitigation were first and foremost activities of a humanitarian nature, they were also closely linked to development; yet the tie between disaster management and development efforts should not obscure the fact that disaster relief was an entirely different activity and that disaster mitigation demanded skills which were not always available within the framework of development programmes. The fact that the administrative procedures of the United Nations and of some donor Governments were not normally geared to deal with emergencies was a problem to which increasing attention would need to be paid.

25. 1991 would mark the twentieth anniversary of the founding of UNDRO by General Assembly resolution 2816 (XXVI). The concepts contained in that resolution were still valid. The idea of creating an effective organization to co-ordinate international disaster relief and to stimulate preparedness and prevention had stood the test of time, and UNDRO was more than ever striving to ensure that that idea became a reality by strengthening its capacities and trying to obtain additional resources. Given such features as the many actors involved in disaster management, the execution of the mandate of UNDRO was not a simple task; however, he and his colleagues were convinced that it could be carried out with support from the international community.

26. Mr. ADEI (United Nations Development Programme), referring to the report of the Secretary-General on special economic and disaster relief assistance (A/45/358), reviewed the situation in the eight countries which had been helped to deal with special difficulties in their efforts to develop or reconstruct their economies. Six of them were classified as least developed countries. In Benin, the new Government had decided to continue implementing its structural adjustment programme, the principal measures of which were described in the report of the Secretary-General.

27. The Central African Republic was also continuing to implement its structural adjustment programme. The financial difficulties it faced as a land-locked country had been exacerbated by the weakness of world coffee and tobacco prices. As recommended at the round-table conference held at Geneva in June 1987, a number of sectoral meetings had been organized and others were scheduled.

28. With regard to Chad, he said that the third round-table conference of donors had been held in June 1990 and that a number of sectoral consultations were scheduled. The United Nations system was providing Chad with substantial assistance especially in the areas of health and food. In addition, he said that in 1989 the international community had provided $US 6,727,000 to deal with a plague of migratory locusts.

29. With regard to Madagascar, he noted that the report referred to the beginnings of economic growth in 1988 after a decade of efforts aimed at financial stabilization. Increasing attention was now being given to the social and environmental dimensions of adjustment.

30. Yemen had experienced disastrous floods in March 1989. UNDP assistance was being directed both to reconstruction and to efforts to strengthen the countries' capacity in disaster-recovery management.

31. Djibouti had launched a budgetary austerity programme in an effort to reduce its trade deficit. Signs that the situation was improving were already noted. WFP, UNHCR and UNICEF were providing substantial assistance.

32. The difficulties confronting Vanuatu had been compounded by two cyclones which had caused considerable destruction in 1988 and 1989. A round-table conference of donors had been held in 1988 for the purpose of integrating various sources of assistance into the countries' overall development plan.

33. Although considerable economic progress had been recorded in Ecuador in 1989, the country was still confronted with serious problems which impeded its development.

34. All the countries referred to had benefited from special programmes of economic assistance. The idea was to co-ordinate and integrate that assistance into their individual development plans. It should be borne in mind that the adjustment programmes currently being implemented had significant social cost implications and that the countries concerned could not attain the financial

stability and economic growth to which they aspired without generous support from the international community.

35. Mr. MILINTACHINDA (Thailand) said his country attached great importance to the role of UNDRO in co-ordinating emergency relief operations. His Government had been able to observe the effectiveness of UNDRO's work on the occasion of the floods which had devastated southern Thailand in 1988. In an effort to mitigate the impact of disasters, Thailand had established a committee for co-ordinating emergency relief. Special efforts had been made to rehabilitate the people displaced from their homes as a result of the floods. The Chulabhorn Research Institute also implemented rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes with assistance from UNDP. In addition, the Government of Thailand had, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 42/169, created a committee to co-ordinate its relief activities with those undertaken by the United Nations system.

36. Thailand had incorporated disaster prevention and mitigation measures into its seventh Economic and Social Development Plan. To facilitate the integration of such measures, the country would welcome assistance from UNDP and UNDRO, which could, for example, provide advice on the use of the early warning systems or on the implementation of disaster contingency plans.

37. Thailand attached great importance to the Special Economic Assistance programmes which might, in certain cases, be supplemented by additional assistance on a bilateral basis. As part of its humanitarian efforts, Thailand had contributed to the Trust Fund to assist Mozambique; it had also provided assistance for the drought victims in southern Angola and intended to continue contributing to the world-wide effort in respect of disaster mitigation.

38. Thailand reaffirmed its support for the activities of UNDRO and asked the international community to strengthen the effectiveness of the measures taken to help countries affected by disaster by supporting the efforts being made by UNDRO and other United Nations bodies.

39. Mr. FONDI (Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Community, said that natural disasters were becoming more frequent: the number of people affected by them had more then doubled in the 1980s compared to the 1960s, increasing from 28 million to 64 million.

40. The toll was particularly severe in developing countries because average yearly losses during the past 20 years had amounted to more than 2.5 per cent of GNP in the 17 most disaster-prone countries, and more than 5 per cent of GNP in six of them.

41. In such a situation, the role of the United Nations system, particularly that of UNDRO, was crucial. Logically, the first task of the Office was to improve pre-disaster planning and disaster prevention. It was basically a question of promoting the study and prevention of natural disasters, in particular through the dissemination of information on scientific and technical developments in order to

(Mr. Fondi, Italy)

facilitate the adoption of structural reinforcement measures. In that respect, it was important that UNDRO should help national authorities improve their disaster assessment and relief management capability in order to make preparedness an integral part of national planning. Preparedness and prevention were being given special attention within the framework of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. In that regard, there was a need for close co-operation between UNDRO and the secretariat of the Decade.

42. The fundamental task of the Office, however, was to provide disaster relief in both the area of disaster information and that of relief co-ordination. With regard to the first point, it was essential to gather and transmit accurate and reliable information to ensure good co-ordination. The Twelve appreciated the effective work carried out by UNDRO in that field and fully supported its role as global co-ordinator. It usually succeeded in being the focal point for communication between victims and Governments, on the one hand, and donor officials and the general public, on the other. The Twelve commended in particular the ongoing modernization of its electronic communication system and felt that it was necessary to pursue the idea of establishing a data bank on disaster management and technical expertise available throughout the world. That would make it easy to send experts on field missions immediately after a disaster. The second aspect of the Office's work, namely, relief co-ordination, which involved mobilizing the international community, was crucial in order to provide an immediate and effective response in emergency situations.

43. While recognizing the recent progress made, the Twelve were convinced that the Office could considerably enhance the effectiveness of existing mechanisms and, in particular, improve the co-ordination of assistance to victims. The plight of the refugees from Iraq and Kuwait in Jordan was alarming and it must be admitted that the operations conducted to assist them had not been as satisfactory as one might have wished. At the same time, the Twelve were aware of the fact that the ultimate results of activities carried out by the international community depended very much on the effectiveness of national co-ordination mechanisms. It was essential to improve those mechanisms.

44. The Twelve commended the increasing and fruitful collaboration between UNDRO and UNDP, particularly the Office's intention to strengthen its relationship with resident representatives. It was very appropriate that UNDP regarded disaster preparedness and prevention as essential elements of country programmes. It would thus be easier to integrate disaster mitigation into national development plans. Nevertheless, the nations affected must seek help to improve their preparedness.

45. The European Community expressed satisfaction at the efforts of the Office to strengthen its collaboration with non-governmental organizations, scientific groups and universities. It was well known that very often the effectiveness of the assistance provided was greatly enhanced by the contribution of non-governmental organizations.

46. Mr. DOUTOUM (Chad) stressed that the developing countries were the most affected by the deterioration of the international economic situation and that their situation might worsen owing to increases in the price of oil. For that reason, the second Paris Conference on the Least Developed Countries was important and the commitments undertaken in the Declaration that had been adopted there should be carried out immediately.

47. Throughout the 1980s, Chad had benefited from sustained assistance by the international community above all because it had been the victim of a number of disasters. Its economic activities had suffered from three major events, namely the war of aggression which had impoverished the country, the drought and the ensuing desertification, and the slump in the price of cotton, which was the main source of income.

48. Under those difficult circumstances, the Government had adopted a structural adjustment programme which had received significant international aid (IMF, the African Development Bank, Saudi Arabia, the World Bank and EEC).

49. In spite of the difficulties besetting it, which resulted mainly from its indebtedness, Chad was firmly committed to a reform and restructuring policy and naturally welcomed the holding of the third round-table conference in Geneva in June 1990. It was now a question of consolidating progress made in the reconstruction phase and promoting the country's economic and social development. In that regard, Chad would seek to increase domestic production by modernizing productive structures, increasing the participation of the population in development and re-establishing the general macro-economic balance. Rural development, the first priority, would continue to be given increased attention. The development of human resources was another priority area and particular importance in that regard was attached to women, who must be integrated into the development process and whose access to decision-making bodies must be expanded.

50. The orientation plan approved in Geneva would be reviewed by the Government on the basis of the sectoral and thematic consultations that had been scheduled and should focus on the following points: the technical co-operation policy, the private sector, the environment and measures to combat desertification, rural development, food security and water resources, and, lastly, urban development.

51. His Government had firmly committed itself to fulfilling its obligations to the international community. In view of the immensity of the task to be carried out, Chad would once again submit a draft resolution which would provide the legal basis for following up action taken 10 years earlier and hoped that it would receive the unanimous support of the Committee.

52. Chad was once again threatened by famine. Agricultural production would undoubtedly stagnate, particularly in the Sahelian region. Crop damage had already occurred and the situation was at times critical. The fragile gains might be endangered and urgent action must be taken by the international community.

53. Mr. BARAC (Romania) noted with appreciation the very important work carried out by UNDRO during the biennium 1988-1989. Disaster relief operations had significantly increased because of a growing number of natural disasters and their serious human, economic and social impact. The Office had therefore considerably developed its emergency transport and warehousing facility, and its airlift and air-drop operations for emergency relief. Although the Office had also broadened its activities related to disaster preparedness and prevention, it should also expand its disaster mitigation programmes particularly since the cost of such activities was very modest in relation to the loss of life and property losses that they could prevent. Governments recognized the benefits of those activities and disaster mitigation techniques which were better defined and more widely applicable. Romania supported the Office's proposed medium-term plan and the activities planned in that regard, particularly, the dissemination of manuals on disaster mitigation techniques, the organization of training seminars, the provision of technical expertise, the exchange of experience between disaster-prone developing countries, as well as programmes aimed at predicting natural disasters and the preparation of work programmes for the step-by-step application of disaster mitigation techniques on the basis of disaster probability. Studies of the losses caused by past disasters could serve as a guide in evaluating future risks.

54. Romania had received, after the revolution of December 1989, very substantial humanitarian aid from many Governments and various agencies and individuals. The new Romanian authorities expressed their profound gratitude to all donors. Unfortunately, foreign assistance was still required in order to overcome the difficulties facing the Romanian people in the current transition to a market-oriented economy.

55. Mr. VERCELES (Philippines) said that the Philippines was an island developing country prone to natural disasters such as typhoons, floods and earthquakes. An extremely violent earthquake had hit the country a few months earlier, causing hundreds of deaths and affecting more than a million people. Houses, schools, bridges and roads had been destroyed and the damage was estimated at $1 billion. The international community had provided immediate relief, demonstrating its increasing capacity to cope with the effects of natural disasters. His Government was deeply grateful to all the countries that had provided assistance and to UNDP, UNDRO, the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations. The earthquake and the relief provided clearly showed clearly that the international community must continue to pay particular attention to the problem of natural disasters and to strengthening co-operation in mitigating their effects. They also highlighted the importance of disaster prevention and preparedness. His country was among those that had benefited from UNDRO efforts in that area. Disaster management training workshops had been organized with the technical assistance of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre. Another project was providing practical guidance in the construction of well-designed, typhoon-resistant, low-cost housing.

56. The international community must also give greater attention to the provision of relief supplies and transport equipment for immediate availability in emergency situations. However, UNDRO lacked the necessary resources; its budget for the current biennium was a meagre $7 million. Its funds should be substantially

(Mr. Verceles, Philippines)

increased in order to enable it to respond to requests for emergency disaster assistance beyond the ceiling of $50,000 per country. That ceiling should be doubled. It was better not to be overly reliant on sudden impulses of generosity on the part of donors.

57. Some disasters were preventable. It was therefore imperative that the international community should give due attention to prevention. That would also allow for sustainable development activities. Natural disasters often cancelled out patient development efforts, with transport and communication facilities, agricultural production and human settlements usually the hardest hit. After a disaster, a country's economy must also make difficult adjustments. Food supplies had to be refurbished and production targets revised.

58. That was the unfortunate experience of the Philippines. The earthquake had occurred at a time when the country was well on the road to development. Having barely recovered from the immediate consequences of the disaster, the country's economy had now been hit by the sharp rise in oil prices caused by the Gulf crisis, which affected many oil-importing developing countries. The Philippines was prepared to act in concert with the international community in urging that the price of oil be maintained at stable and fair levels for both consumers and producers. Statistics apart, the hardships suffered by the victims of natural disasters in their daily lives led him to appeal to the international community to increase its bilateral and multilateral assistance to affected countries.

Mr. Amaziane (Morocco) took the Chair.

59. Mr. BABINGTON (Australia), speaking on behalf of the members of the South Pacific Forum that were members of the United Nations, expressed sympathy to the Caribbean countries recently hit by hurricane Klaus. The year before, hurricane Hugo had caused heavy loss of life and severe property damage. The countries of the South Pacific were all too familiar with such calamities and how they could suddenly cancel out years of patient development efforts. Early in 1990, a number of countries and territories in the region had been hit by cyclone Ofa. That disaster had been the subject of an Economic and Social Council resolution at its organizational session of 1990. Unfortunately, the report on the status of the emergency assistance provided for in that resolution had yet to materialize.

60. In his delegation's view, the system established by UNDRO should have three objectives: firstly, information, since the United Nations system should provide a forum for stricken countries to bring their plight to the attention of the international community, inter alia, through the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Secondly, relief co-ordination and information about an emergency in a given country, were very useful to the international community, especially donors. He cited the example of the accurate information flow under Operation Lifeline Sudan. Thirdly, UNDRO should play a more active role in preventing and mitigating the effects of disasters, paying special attention to the many linkages between those efforts and the overall development process. The countries of the South Pacific Forum reaffirmed their confidence in UNDRO and their

(Mr. Babington, Australia)

support for its mandate and work. In that connection, they welcomed UNDRO's plans to carry out in-country needs identification surveys in order to develop a disaster mitigation work programme in the South-West Pacific, with special emphasis on cyclones. That was consistent with the Forum's recent call for steps in the area of disaster preparedness. He hoped that those plans would soon be implemented, despite resources constraints and that UNDRO and the secretariat of the South Pacific Forum would strengthen their co-operation.

61. The countries of the South Pacific Forum fully supported the objectives of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, which would reduce the impact of disasters on humanity. In that context, there ought to be the strongest possible linkages between UNDRO and UNDP. UNDP had responded rapidly to reconstruction and rehabilitation needs after several cyclones in the region. As part of that co-operation, the central co-ordinating role of the UNDP resident co-ordinator of disaster relief and mitigation activities must be firmly established. UNDRO had also made efforts to co-operate with non-governmental organizations, which often played an invaluable role in emergency assistance and prevention activities.

62. While there was certainly no way to prevent natural disasters, their often terrible effects could at least be mitigated with foresight and preparation. United Nations work in that area was practical and invaluable.

63. Mr. MISSARY (Yemen) said that his delegation had read with great interest the Secretary-General's report on assistance to Yemen (A/45/358). It was grateful to the United Nations and its agencies for their unremitting efforts to mobilize the assistance his country needed and thanked all those who had helped it deal with the disasters it had suffered.

64. His delegation wanted the name "Democratic Yemen" to be replaced in reports once and for all by "Republic of Yemen", particularly since the change of name dated back to 2 May 1990, when the Republic of Yemen had been proclaimed. It hoped that the Secretariat would take note of that observation.

65. Paragraphs 69 to 74 of the report dealt with the disasters suffered by Yemen in 1982 and 1989, the country's political development - particularly the birth of the Republic of Yemen - and the economic situation. The document, which had been prepared after the proclamation of the Republic of Yemen, should have mentioned the process of unifying the institutions of the two States and the attendant additional burdens, which would inevitably affect the country's economic and social development. It should also have mentioned the serious effects of the Gulf crisis for Yemen, particularly the financial repercussions and economic and social consequences of the return of nearly 200,000 Yemeni workers, which were likely to exacerbate the difficulties of an already sorely tried economy.

66. Recalling that the purpose of General Assembly resolution 44/179 had been to determine assistance needs from an overall standpoint so as to enable the country to complete the reconstruction efforts begun after the 1982 disaster, and

(Mr. Missary, Yemen)

particularly to cope with the consequences of the 1989 disaster, his delegation noted that the Secretary-General's report prepared pursuant to that resolution had not fulfilled that purpose. Similarly, document A/C.2/45/L.1/Add.1 (state of preparation of documentation) made no mention of resolution 44/179. He hoped that the Secretariat would explain that omission.

67. Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Committee), noting the points raised by the delegation of Yemen, said that they would be taken into account and that he would keep the delegation informed.

68. Mr. MacARTHUR (United States of America) noted with satisfaction the increasing effectiveness with which the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) was performing its task, particularly its objective reporting of major disaster relief efforts. In the case of the Iran earthquake, in particular, the Office had provided a balanced view of the damage and the response which might not otherwise have been available. More recently, it had co-ordinated assistance to refugees evacuated from Iraq to Jordan. The appointment of a special UNDRO co-ordinator in the field had greatly facilitated the relief effort.

69. It was also encouraging to see UNDRO strengthening its ties with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in both disaster relief and preparedness activities. The Office had also reviewed its information systems and planned to improve them. He hoped that UNDRO would achieve those goals.

70. Mr. HASSAN (Pakistan) said that his country appreciated the efforts of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) to provide timely assistance to countries affected by natural disasters. The developing countries, which lacked the necessary infrastructure and financial resources, were particularly vulnerable to such calamities. It was therefore essential to strengthen UNDRO. It was particularly important for UNDRO to expand its capacity to disseminate timely and reliable disaster-related information and to update its profiles of high-risk countries. Efforts to develop an international disaster management information network must be intensified and co-operation between UNDRO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) strengthened. There was also a need to convene meetings at the regional and international level to facilitate the exchange of expertise for the prevention and control of disasters.

71. On the question of finances, he noted with satisfaction that the Office had been able to gain the support of an increasing number of donor countries. It was imperative that that support be maintained and strengthened.

72. At its forty-fourth session, the General Assembly had adopted nine resolutions on special assistance to a number of countries and regions. His delegation fully supported the programmes envisaged in those resolutions and emphasized the need for them to be implemented in full. While some progress had been made in alleviating the plight of those countries, following the adoption of the resolutions, a great deal more needed to be done. It was essential, therefore, that the international community increase its assistance in order to meet the reconstruction needs of those countries.

(Mr. Hassan, Pakistan)

73. The crisis in the Gulf had seriously strained the economies of many developing countries, including Pakistan, which were already facing serious economic problems. The dramatic increase in oil prices and the suspension of trade and of remittances from nationals employed in Iraq and Kuwait had plunged their economies into deep crisis. Pakistan's current account deficit would increase by $2 billion in the present year alone. With the low level of foreign exchange liquid reserves, it would be virtually impossible to cope with the situation. It was therefore essential that the international community and the multilateral financial institutions release additional resources to those hard pressed countries and that the United Nations system make its own contribution to alleviating their plight.

74. Mr. ZANDAMELA (Mozambique) said that the international community must give urgent attention to the question of special economic assistance to countries which for various reasons were experiencing serious difficulties in their efforts to achieve economic and social development.

75. Special economic assistance continued to be a matter of great concern for Mozambique because of the protracted war of attrition that had diverted much of its limited resources to the defence of its people and its territorial integrity. That war of destabilization had claimed many victims, inflicted considerable material damage and caused the breakdown of socio-economic infrastructures. As a result of that tragedy, thousands of families had been displaced, deprived of all their possessions and reduced to conditions of extreme poverty.

76. The international donors' conference on emergency assistance to Mozambique recently organized jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Mozambique, had decided, among other things, that assistance would be given only to the population directly affected by the emergency. The response of the international community, although encouraging, had not been sufficient to cover the country's pressing needs.

77. If the situation was to be prevented from deteriorating further, the working relationship between the Government, the donor community, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations must continue to be strengthened.

78. In that context, the proposal to create reserve stocks should considerably improve food security in the most stricken areas. Experience showed that the programme for the distribution of seeds and agricultural tools to displaced persons had, with the support of the Government and donors, reduced their dependence on food aid. That initiative deserved vigorous support.

79. The some 200,000 Mozambican returnees from neighbouring countries posed a major problem for the country. Their resettlement and reintegration was a difficult task which would need strong backing from the United Nations system.

80. At the World Bank consultative meeting held in November 1989, a new economic and social rehabilitation programme for the country had been launched which envisaged a strategy for economic growth and poverty alleviation, especially in

(Mr. Zandamela, Mozambique)

rural areas. That undertaking would be a point of departure for revitalizing the country's development process.

81. The recent developments in southern Africa, in particular the independence of Namibia which had marked the downfall of the last stronghold of colonialism in Africa, were of paramount importance for the restoration of peace and stability in the region. The new developments in South Africa were encouraging, but there would never be prosperity in the region until its peoples were ready to work together for peace and progress.

82. Internally, the Government was doing its utmost to bring about peace and stability and was ready to discuss any matter of substance that might bring about the fulfilment of that aim.

83. He reaffirmed his Government's determination to continue to work closely with the United Nations system and with governmental and non-governmental organizations towards reducing the suffering of millions of Mozambicans.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-FIFTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
12th meeting
held on
Friday, 12 October 1990
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. PAPADATOS	(Greece)
later:	Mr. GIANELLI (Vice-Chairman)	(Uruguay)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 86: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (continued) (A/45/224 and 598)

(a) OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF CO-ORDINATOR (continued) (A/45/3, A/45/271 and Corr.1-E/1990/78 and Corr.1)

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AGENDA ITEM 87: INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE ECONOMIC REHABILITATION OF ANGOLA (continued) (A/45/551 and 598)

1. Mr. LÄÄRIÄ (Finland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries on agenda item 86 (a), noted that many countries had been affected by disasters and emergencies during the preceding year, with the current situation in the Gulf highlighting the problems that man-made emergencies could create. The inadequacy of the international response to those phenomena pointed up the need for greater co-ordination within the United Nations system and with the countries concerned and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

2. The primary responsibility for disaster preparedness and management lay with national authorities. Thus the emergency relief programmes of United Nations agencies should not be viewed as a replacement for action at the national level. The notion that national machineries should be enhanced was reflected in General Assembly resolution 44/236, and the Nordic countries were prepared to support measures to strengthen those machineries.

3. The Nordic countries played an active role on the governing bodies of agencies and funds involved in emergency assistance, and had called for improvements in inter-agency co-ordination. Such efforts must involve local and international NGOs, and permanent, efficient channels for the sharing and dissemination of information between the United Nations system and those organizations must be set up and maintained.

4. It was clear that the United Nations and other international organizations were not adequately prepared to implement immediate, co-ordinated and effective humanitarian efforts. The experience acquired to date in that field should be utilized to strengthen the Organization's co-ordinating function, an area which the Nordic countries were exploring. He welcomed the intention of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) to develop the Organization's mitigation activities further and to pay particular attention to the strengthening of relations between agencies operating in disaster situations. However, it was unfortunate that the Secretary-General's report on UNDRO (A/45/271 and Corr.1) did not specify the measures that would be taken to improve co-operation, nor did chapter II of the report, on major developments concerning the Office as a whole, adequately address the issue of co-ordination.

(Mr. Kääriä, Finland)

5. Reliable, accessible data were a prerequisite for efficient and timely action in emergencies. While UNDRO provided a steady flow of information, its situation reports did not appear to include information on the assistance needs of all organizations in a specific situation or reliable data on the progress of programme implementation. The compilation of such information might be difficult, but efforts to improve data collection should be continued, and UNDRO needed to be able to rely on the timely delivery of information from donors, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and Governments. At the field level, that task should be carried out in close co-operation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

6. He welcomed the efforts of UNDRO to strengthen its information system using new telecommunications technology. In that connection, particular attention should be paid to the compilation of information on meteorological and atmospheric changes.

7. In conclusion, the Governments of the Nordic countries would continue to assist the United Nations system in dealing efficiently and in timely fashion with issues and activities relating to disasters and emergencies.

8. Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh) commended the work of UNDRO, which had proved to be of immense value to many countries, including Bangladesh. Two years previously, Bangladesh had been struck by the worst floods in living memory, which had inundated 85 per cent of the country and affected 45 million people. The disaster had underlined the susceptibility of Bangladesh, and of developing countries in general, to the whims of nature. The number of natural disasters was rising, their scale was growing, and the demands for adequate response to them were increasing. That combination of circumstances had posed a serious challenge to UNDRO's ability to meet such disasters effectively. Calls upon UNDRO by developing countries for assistance in strengthening their capacity to meet natural disasters had also increased UNDRO's work-load.

9. While noting with satisfaction UNDRO's timely assistance following the Gulf crisis, its co-operation with UNDP and with NGOs, and its efforts to strengthen its information system, Bangladesh nevertheless stressed that the activities of UNDRO had to be underwritten by sound and predictable resources, and joined the appeal to all Governments, particularly the donor community, to increase their contributions to the Office's work.

10. Within the Framework of Action for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, Bangladesh had taken steps in the fields of disaster mitigation and prevention: strengthening local administrations, enhancing public awareness, improving emergency health-care capacities, and so on. It regretted, however, that sufficient progress had not been made regarding the organizational arrangements for the Decade.

11. The Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries had highlighted the severe and lasting impact of natural and man-made disasters on the national

(Mr. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

economies of those countries, and had stressed that they should receive priority attention, specifically referring to the implementation of a programme of flood control in Bangladesh. Bangladesh was confident that international support for such projects would be timely, adequate and effective.

12. In the current uncertain phase of global economic evolution, with its possibility of recession, spiralling energy prices and economic and political restructuring in certain countries, the already limited capacity and meagre resources of the developing countries, particularly the least developed, to cope with disasters, could very well shrink further. It would thus be an important responsibility of the international community, in particular the developed countries and the United Nations system, to extend all necessary assistance to such countries. Bangladesh hoped that the Committee's deliberations would lead to concrete results in that area.

13. Miss GHANNAM (Morocco) expressed her country's solidarity with all countries benefiting from special programmes of economic assistance. In view of the critical, and often disastrous, situation of those countries, the international community should make greater efforts to mobilize the resources required to implement such programmes. The fact that many African countries had benefited from special programmes of economic assistance illustrated their extreme vulnerability. Africa was in fact the most disadvantaged region of the world; the crisis there could not be solved by a smattering of projects and programmes, even if well-designed and co-ordinated. Rather, the international community must make greater, more coherent long-term efforts that went beyond the framework of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990.

14. Emergency situations often reflected the fact that many developing countries had seen their efforts brought to naught by natural or man-made disasters whose effects were aggravated by the fact that most of those countries lacked prevention, early-warning and preparation services. In the spirit of Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/63, her delegation wished to reaffirm its confidence in UNDRO, which had fulfilled its growing responsibilities despite limited resources and a lack of qualified personnel. She also reaffirmed the Office's mandate as set out in General Assembly resolution 2816 (XXVI). It was to be hoped that UNDRO could be provided with the staffing and other resources it needed to perform more effectively.

15. Factors such as massive urbanization, population density, climate change and other phenomena linked to the natural and economic environment were making communities more vulnerable to disasters, the number of which had increased in recent years, particularly in developing countries. The issue should therefore figure prominently in the work of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

16. She expressed support for the Office's efforts in the areas of disaster-relief co-ordination set out in chapter III of the Secretary-General's report (A/45/271

(Miss Ghannam, Morocco)

and Corr.1) and for the conclusions of the third meeting of heads of national emergency relief services (A/45/271, para. 33).

17. She drew attention also to the importance of stocking adequate quantites of supplies and medicines at the UNDRO warehouse at Pisa, and encouraged the Italian Government to follow up on its offer to build a second warehouse in Rome. Should the need arise to build a strategically located regional warehouse, UNDRO could rest assured that the necessary support and facilities could be found in Morocco.

18. The recent flow of displaced persons into Jordan as a result of the Gulf crisis had revealed a number of weaknesses in the operation of the relief system. First of all, considerable time had elapsed between the time financial contributions were pledged and the time that they appeared on site in the form of goods or services. Secondly, it was thanks to the Jordanian Government that the evacuation had begun immediately; had the operation been delayed until the arrival of assistance from the international community, it would have cost a great deal more. Finally, despite the efficiency of UNDRO in Jordan, there was clearly a lack of qualified personnel on site. Consequently, her delegation renewed its appeal to the Secretary-General to provide UNDRO with the human resources it needed to carry out its highly important mission, which enhanced the credibility of the United Nations in the world. She also urged all countries to make voluntary contributions, according to their capacity to do so, to the UNDRO trust fund.

19. Appropriate support to UNDRO would give the Office the moral authority it needed to play in achieving the goals of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. Her delegation had always believed that there was an extremely close correlation between the mandate of UNDRO and the objectives of the Decade, and that follow-up to the Decade would ultimately lie with UNDRO. Accordingly, she urged the Decade secretariat to approach its work from that perspective and to co-operate in the day-to-day work of UNDRO under the authority of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation. The interests of the international community should not be jeopardized by considerations of a secondary nature that might undermine donor confidence.

20. Mr. BOECK (Austria) commended the Secretary-General's report on UNDRO (A/45/271 and Corr.1) and said that, given the prevalence of disasters in recent times, it was particularly urgent that disaster relief mechanisms should be improved and relief efforts co-ordinated. His delegation supported the work of UNDRO, particularly the Office's response to earthquakes in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Philippines and the evacuation of displaced persons from Jordan; its appreciation was reflected in the important role assigned to the Office within the framework of a European convention for co-ordinated assistance in case of disasters, the text of which had been drafted on the basis of an Austrian initiative.

21. Inter-agency co-ordination was a prerequisite for efficient disaster relief efforts. His delegation therefore welcomed the strengthening of the relationship between UNDRO and UNDP, especially the joint training programme, which should do much to improve preparedness and response in disaster-prone developing countries.

(Mr. Boeck, Austria)

22. The Austrian Government welcomed the third meeting of heads of national emergency relief services, which had provided a clearer focus on such topics as the assessment and co-ordination of relief programmes, UNDRO activities and the strengthening of the Office's immediate response capacity and disaster-management training. Pursuant to one of the recommendations of the meeting, UNDRO and the Austrian authorities were currently planning an international workshop on search and rescue for the first half of 1991. Austria had developed some expertise in that field and would be happy to place it at the international community's disposal.

23. UNDRO information and situation reports provided his Government with a useful tool in deciding on the granting of emergency assistance. Such data were particularly valuable for small and middle-sized countries which were not represented in disaster-stricken regions or States. He agreed with the Disaster Relief Co-ordinator that an important area for constant improvement was the Office's data-processing and communications facility, and the development of the United Nations International Emergency Network (UNIENET) in particular. He concluded by urging that UNDRO should play an important role in the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/236 and in view of the Office's expertise.

24. Mr. WOLFF (Colombia) said that the recent increase in natural disasters had placed great financial strain on UNDRO, and donor countries should increase their contributions in order to facilitate the work of the Office.

25. Because of its geographical location, Colombia was permanently exposed to tidal waves on its Pacific coast, earthquakes in a large part of its territory, sudden landslides and floods in its mountainous region and hurricanes along its Atlantic coast. The Colombian National Office for Disaster Prevention and Control had been established in 1986 with the technical and financial co-operation of UNDP. For the first time, Colombia's development plan included the prevention of risks as a fundamental element of planning.

26. With the support of the Canadian Government and UNDP, the Colombian national seismic network, the first of its kind in South America, would begin operating in 1991. In the area of vulcanology, Colombia had preliminary maps of seven of its 15 active volcanoes and had approved funds for the purchase of the equipment needed to monitor them closely. Recently, the first part of the automated hydrometeorological alert network, which had 17 stations in the principal river basins, had been inaugurated.

27. Colombia's principal goals during the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction included the strengthening of the national system for disaster prevention and control; prevention of risks in development planning; completion of seismic, vulcanological and hydrometeorological networks; establishment of a national information system; protection and/or relocation of 100,000 dwellings situated in high-risk areas; strengthening of relief organizations; preservation of the purity of rivers and streams and protection of their basins; and inclusion of

the concept of risk prevention in school and university curricula and mass dissemination of information on disasters.

28. Mr. VAN BRAKEN (Canada) said that Canada wished to acknowledge the valuable contribution which UNDRO had made and continued to make in co-ordinating much of the international effort to sustain and relocate the hundreds of thousands of people affected by the crisis in the Persian Gulf. On 14 September 1990, the Prime Minister of Canada had announced that a sum of up to $Can 75 million would be allocated for humanitarian and economic assistance for people and countries seriously affected by the Gulf crisis. A portion of that assistance was being used to charter Canadian civilian aircraft to help airlift displaced persons to their home countries. That effort was being co-ordinated closely with UNDRO and with the International Organization for Migration.

29. His delegation believed that UNDRO should focus on sudden and specific emergencies (as distinct from long-term phenomena such as drought), emphasize its co-ordinating role and continue to develop its systems for generating and disseminating information on emergency situations and disaster relief activities. The intensified co-operation emerging from the joint UNDP/UNDRO task force would help the system's front line - the field staff - manage disaster-related activities better. Canada especially supported the planned training programme, to which it had contributed $75,000.

30. With the mounting demand for services in the disaster field, especially in the context of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, the Office's limited resources would require that its basic mandates were carried out as effectively as possible. At the same time, a certain degree of flexibility should be exercised. UNDRO should avail itself of the global communications and computing capacity which had emerged in recent years in order to create a global network of accredited experts in a wide variety of fields who would be able on very short notice to provide specialized information and advice to Governments facing emergencies of various kinds. The United Nations had already developed global or regional communications systems which could be adapted or expanded for that purpose.

31. Canada was concerned at the impediments to effective relief activities in Ethiopia and the Sudan, and hoped that those in a position to do so would make the port of Massawa available for humanitarian relief purposes as soon as possible. The Sudanese Government's decision to allow the resumption of relief flights was a welcome and necessary step, and Canada looked forward to the thorough review of Operation Lifeline Sudan, which would take place in mid-November 1990.

32. Mr. YUAN Shaofu (China) said that, as a disaster-prone country, China had always attached great importance to the work of disaster prevention and relief and had adopted a combined policy of disaster prevention, resistance and relief work. On 10 October 1990, in observance of the first International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction, China had conducted a series of activities to raise the awareness of the Chinese people about disaster reduction. Because of its limited level of economic development, China found it difficult to meet the urgent needs of

(Mr. Yuan Shaofu, China)

large sectors of its population when it was confronted with extremely serious natural disasters. China hoped to carry out technical co-operation and exchange information and experience with the international community and United Nations organizations in the area of disaster prevention, and welcomed the emergency disaster relief assistance provided by friendly countries and international organizations to disaster-stricken areas of China.

33. The United Nations system, in particular UNDRO, UNDP and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), had made disaster relief assistance more efficient and effective. However, there was still room for further improvement. When natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods and typhoons took place, the United Nations system and the international community should provide emergency assistance more promptly in order to reduce casualties and material damage. In the provision of emergency assistance, the actual needs of the affected population should be taken into account.

34. Mr. VENERA (Czechoslovakia) said that disaster relief was one of the most important humanitarian tasks which the international community had been pursuing through the United Nations. Many disasters resulted not from natural causes but from harmful activities by humans, of which the latest example was the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. It was gratifying that individuals, politicians and nations were feeling increasing responsibility towards one another, a development in which UNDRO had undoubtedly played an important part.

35. Czechoslovakia attached great importance to full attainment of the objectives of the International Decade for Prevention of Natural Disasters. Thought also needed to be given to ways of minimizing the consequences of the disasters caused by man, whether environmental catastrophes or military conflict. That too, required good will and international co-operation.

36. Such co-operation had brought a number of positive results, for example the relief provided after the earthquake in Iran, relief to which Czechoslovakia had contributed. Czechoslovakia welcomed the activity of the United Nations in that field, and was ready to help as far as its resources allowed.

37. Mr. RAKHMATULLAEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) commended the efforts of the United Nations and the Secretary-General to mobilize and co-ordinate the international community's provision of economic assistance to countries in critical situations. The Soviet Union had recently provided assistance free of charge to Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, Somalia, Djibouti and Madagascar, and Soviet experts had helped combat the locust plague in Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Mali, Algeria and Tunisia. In 1989, the Soviet Red Cross had provided emergency humanitarian assistance to 60 countries, at a cost of approximately 6.7 million roubles. The Soviet Union was currently providing assistance to the victims of the earthquake in Iran through the USSR League of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. According to preliminary data, the USSR had provided assistance to Iran amounting to more than 4 million roubles, not including transport costs and the expenses involved in sending specialists to that country.

(Mr. Rakhmatullaev, USSR)

38. The Soviet Union was strongly in favour of an enhanced co-ordinating role of the United Nations in planning and carrying out programmes of special economic and disaster relief assistance to disaster-stricken countries, especially in critical emergency situations. The number of natural disasters and major industrial accidents which had taken place in the USSR in the past few years, including earthquakes in Armenia, Tadzhikistan and Kazakhstan, a flood in Bashkiria and the nuclear accident at Chernobyl, had convinced the Soviet Union of the need for further co-ordination of multilateral co-operation and of the importance of international solidarity.

39. The activities of UNDRO must be improved so that the Office could become an international centre for the exchange of experience and information with a view to predicting and preventing the risks of natural disasters and co-ordinating international efforts to eliminate their consequences.

40. At the beginning of 1990 the Soviet Union had established a National Committee for the observance of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, and was currently formulating a programme of action for that Committee. In 1990, the USSR had acceded to the open agreement of the Council of Europe on the prediction, prevention and rendering of assistance in cases of natural disasters and technological accidents, had established contacts with the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre and had increased its participation in UNDRO activities. The Soviet Union organized annual seminars on natural disasters.

41. The most earthquake-prone region of the Soviet Union was the Tadzhik SSR, where over 3,000 earthquakes took place every year. Tadzhikistan's experience in eliminating the consequences of destructive earthquakes which had taken place in the Republic during the past decade and its research on the prediction of such natural disasters would enable it to co-operate actively with all interested parties. The fruitful co-operation between the Institute for Earthquake-Resistant Construction and Seismology of the Academy of Sciences of the Tadzhik SSR and UNDRO provided a good basis for further multilateral co-operation in that area.

42. The question of including the USSR among the subscribers to UNIENET and establishing in the USSR a UNDRO depot for storing materials and necessities for providing emergency assistance to countries stricken by natural disasters was currently being decided upon. In accordance with the decision of UNDRO to establish a data bank on the capabilities of donor countries to render assistance in cases of natural disasters, the Soviet Union had sent UNDRO a list of scientists and consultants who were available to take part in UNDRO expert missions.

43. An important outcome of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction could be a United Nations universal convention or a declaration on principles and procedures for international co-operation in the elimination of the consequences of natural disasters and industrial accidents.

44. Mr. SANGA (United Republic of Tanzania) recalled that in March and April of the current year, widespread flooding in his country had cost several hundred

(Mr. Sanga, Tanzania)

people their lives and made approximately 150,000 homeless and destitute. He expressed the sincere appreciation of his Government for the promptness with which the United Nations system had responded to its appeal for emergency relief and assistance.

45. Tanzania was also indebted to all other donors of support at a time of dire need. UNDRO was deserving of special thanks for the manner in which it had continued to carry out its activities under very difficult conditions and constraints. His delegation joined other countries in urging the international community to increase its assistance to UNDRO. Disasters could strike anywhere and at any time, and UNDRO would not be able to react promptly and adequately if sufficient resources and facilities were not made available to it.

46. Mr. AFOLABI (Nigeria) pointed out that in addition to being known as a continent struggling with a series of economic problems, Africa was also recognized as disaster-prone, being subject to drought, intermittent locust invasion and desertification, which in turn caused a further problem, that of refugees. In recent times, however, the responses of the international community and the United Nations system, particularly UNDRO, UNDP, WHO and UNICEF, to the situations in Niger, Sudan, the Gulf, Liberia and elsewhere had helped tremendously to minimize the hardships to which people had been exposed. Nigeria saluted all those involved for their courage and dedication, and hoped that resources would continue to be available to support their efforts. While the recent positive developments in East-West relations had increased hopes for a more peaceful and orderly world, the world community had been reminded recently by the events in the Gulf and Liberia that there would always be a need for preparedness to deal with such situations.

47. The Government of Nigeria had assisted a few countries faced by disasters. For example, it had sent relief material to Iran immediately after the earthquake there. In West Africa, Nigeria and other countries were combining peace-making with disaster relief. Given the large number of refugees involved, Nigeria called on the international community to further assist in the relief efforts now going on. In addition to current international efforts to provide relief for thousands of refugees displaced by the Liberian crisis, Nigeria had embarked on the task of evacuating and rehabilitating over 7,000 refugees of all nationalities currently in Lagos. Nigeria welcomed the involvement of UNDRO in the relief work, and hoped that the donor community would continue its traditional support for UNDRO so that relief would be available wherever and whenever needed.

48. Mr. SHOJI (Japan) commended UNDRO for its activities, which had played a major role in arousing the international concern necessary to mobilize funds to assist countries facing special difficulties.

49. For the international community to be able to provide appropriate and timely assistance in the event of natural or other disasters, it needed to receive prompt information on the requirements of the country affected. The Japanese Government highly appreciated the information and situation reports provided by UNDRO, and hoped that they would continue to gain in promptness and accuracy.

(Mr. Shoji, Japan)

50. Countries seeking assistance should make their requests as concrete as possible, and should be expeditious in accepting such emergency assistance when it was offered. The activities of rescue and medical teams should normally be co-ordinated by the disaster relief headquarters of the country concerned, and the disaster-prone countries needed to make considerable improvements in their co-ordination ability. To avoid duplication of assistance, it was important that relevant information be collected in the country concerned, and that the missions of donor countries there maintained very close contact with each other.

51. The Japanese Government intended to continue its efforts at improving disaster assistance, and also to make assistance available not only in the form of bilateral aid but also through intergovernmental organizations and NGOs.

52. A critical situation affecting all nations, although to varying extent, was the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. As a result of that naked violation of the United Nations Charter, tens of thousands of people had been obliged to flee from Iraq and Kuwait to Jordan, and many countries were suffering economic difficulties as a result. Japan had taken a series of measures to assist those most gravely affected. It had provided around $22 million as a fund for evacuee relief activities, of which $8 million had gone to UNDRO, $2 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross, and $12 million to the International Organization for Migrants. In response to the request of the Government of Jordan, it had provided material assistance worth 98 million yen for the refugee camps, and was providing economic co-operation totalling around $2 billion, $600 million of which in the form of emergency commodity assistance to Egypt, Turkey and Jordan. Thanks to the relief activities of UNDRO and other organizations, the situation of displaced persons in the Gulf was now well under control. Japan commended those international organizations for their effective work, and Jordan for the humanitarian manner in which it had conducted itself in a critical situation.

53. In conclusion, Japan reaffirmed its support for concerted international action to alleviate the suffering of countries and people around the world.

54. Mr. Gianelli (Uruguay), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

55. Mr. BULBULIA (Barbados) said it was vital that there should be renewed commitment by the international community to increase support for UNDRO in its efforts not only to bring relief to the millions who suffered the effects of disasters, but also to enhance Governments' disaster prevention and preparedness capabilities. In attempting to deal with their vulnerability to a range of potential natural disasters, the Caribbean countries had discovered that apart from being better prepared, they also had to be better organized to receive assistance from abroad. Local preparedness and relief organizations had been established, and regional co-ordination mechanisms put in place.

56. Able assistance had been given by the Pan-Caribbean Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Project, under the auspices of UNDRO. As that Project drew to a close, the Caribbean Community States had discussed a possible successor arrangement, and

(Mr. Bulbulia, Barbados)

in the Kingston Declaration issued by the Eleventh Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, had declared their determination to establish a Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency before the next hurricane season. In order to avoid a gap between the orderly termination of the Project and the activation of the new arrangement, Barbados and the other CARICOM States would seek the support of the international community to continue the Project beyond its scheduled termination.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.